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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit introduces students to the topic of minority identity issues in the context of Japanese society, and it is expected that teachers will use this as an opportunity to segue into classroom discussions of minority issues in their own society. The curriculum unit broaches some sensitive and controversial topics that challenge students to examine their own identities and reflect on their feelings and experiences with racial tension and intergroup conflict. In the unit, students learn about four groups of people living in Japan: the "burakumin," Koreans, Ainu, and Okinawans. Lesson 1 sets the context for the entire unit by familiarizing students with minority issues on a general level, starting with notions of identity. Lesson 2 further investigates concepts of identity by placing these notions in the context of real-life situations and events. Lesson 3 examines the nature of Japan's historical legacies that have affected the identities and experiences of its minority-group populations. The final part of the lesson debriefs the entire curriculum unit by leading students into a discussion about minority groups on a general level. Handouts, activity cards, and transparencies are part of each lesson, and extensive reference lists conclude the unit. (BT)

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The Social Fabric of Japan: Case Studies of Selected Minority Groups.

Lai, Selena

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THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF JAPAN

CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED MINORITY GROUPS

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THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF JAPAN
CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED MINORITY GROUPS

Developed by Selena Lai

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Unit Introduction

THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF JAPAN

Rationale and Introduction to Lessons

> No other major nation has such a homogeneity of face, skin, and hair color. From this flows the Japanese sense of nationhood and unity—and perhaps also the sense that any individual's first loyalty is to his nation, not to his individual welfare. (Forbis, William (1975). *Japan Today*. Tokyo: Tuttle, p. 9.)

> Japan is widely perceived as a homogeneous, harmonious society, a uniform cultural monolith. Not only is this view prevalent in Japan, it has also been actively promoted abroad. Examination of minority issues in Japan reveals this to be a myth. It is a myth with serious implications, since it reflects a social ethos that makes no allowances for participation in society by persons of different ethnic or cultural heritage. (Coates, David, ed. (1990). *Shattering the Myth of the Homogeneous Society: Minority Issues and Movements in Japan*. Berkeley, CA: Japan Pacific Resource Network, p. 3.)

The contradiction of these two statements is obvious, but why is there such disagreement about the structure and makeup of Japanese society and why does it even matter to us? Because in any given society, diversity exists in some form or another. The perceptions and misperceptions that exist as a result are a testament to the need for greater understanding and tolerance of diversity. Even Japan, with its long-held image as an ethnically homogeneous nation, is diverse. Though the demographics of the Japanese population do not reflect the same levels of ethnic diversity as in some other nations like the United States, it nevertheless exists in Japan. The question is not so much whether or not diversity exists, but *how* and *why* it exists, and in what contexts and ways it has shaped the individual and collective identities of minority groups in Japanese society.

These are universal questions that transcend national boundaries and are relevant to students around the world. *The Social Fabric of Japan: Case Studies of Selected Minority Groups* introduces students to the topic of minority identity issues in the context of Japanese society. It is expected that teachers will use this as an opportunity to segue into meaningful classroom discussions of minority issues in their own society. This curriculum broaches some sensitive and controversial topics that challenge students to examine their own identities and reflect on their feelings and experiences with racial tension and intergroup conflict. It is

crucial that the teacher be able to maintain a classroom atmosphere in which students feel safe to participate in the activities and discussions.

In this curriculum, students learn about four groups of people living in Japan: the *burakumin*, Koreans, Ainu, and Okinawans. By examining these groups and their experiences in Japanese society, students will consider the questions raised above and gain a deeper understanding of some critical social issues present in diverse societies and how these experiences have contributed to people's identities.

Lesson 1 sets the context for the entire unit by familiarizing students with minority issues on a general level, starting with notions of identity. The lesson begins by asking students to reflect on their own sense of identity and to think about what defines them both as individuals and as members of particular groups. Students will learn to make connections between the ways in which they think about their own identities and how these identities provide them with a feeling of belonging and with criteria for categorizing themselves and others. Students will participate in a simulation exercise in which they can begin to experience the dynamic between different identity groups that exist as part of a larger group. They will be able to draw upon the simulation to begin discussing parallel issues in real life. In the final part of this lesson, students complete a survey evaluating their current perceptions about Japanese and American societies. The lesson ends with a brief reading about minority groups in Japan. Students will retake the survey after the entire unit has been completed to assess how their perceptions may have changed.

Lesson 2 further investigates concepts of identity by placing these notions in the context of real-life situations and events, since studying concepts in isolation does not allow students to recognize the relevance of these concepts to their own lives. The *burakumin* are Japan's largest minority group and their experience in Japan illustrates the extent to which historical legacies can affect one's identity, even centuries later. In this lesson, students will examine their thoughts and perceptions about discrimination. They will then be asked to apply what they have learned to understand the situation of the *burakumin*.

Lesson 3 examines the nature of Japan's historical legacies that have affected the identities and experiences of its minority-group population. The Ainu, Okinawans, and Koreans in Japan share a common existence as marginalized peoples in Japanese society. Each group has faced in the past, or still faces today, complex issues surrounding its identity as a discrete group in a larger society. This lesson introduces students to these three minority groups and challenges them to draw parallels between the minority groups in Japan and those in other societies. The lesson starts with an introduction to Japan in the context of the international political climate of the mid-19th century and how Japan's era of nationalism and nation building might have been influenced by outside factors such as European imperialism throughout Asia and contemporary theories of Darwinism and social Darwinism. Together, these factors are evaluated in terms of their influence on Japanese society with regard to its minorities. Students then engage in readings and activities specifically about the Ainu, Okinawans, and Koreans in Japan,

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with respect to their identity. The final part of the lesson debriefs the entire curriculum module by leading students into a discussion about minority groups on a general level. Students draw parallels between minority groups and issues in Japan and in other societies.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner, Professor of Education at Harvard University, argues that humans possess varying amounts of 7 intelligences, which they combine and use in highly personal ways that are influenced by culture. In his book *Frames of Mind*, Gardner presented a theory of multiple intelligences, which reinforces his cross-cultural perspective of human cognition. A brief description of Gardner's intelligences follows:[1]

Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence

Verbal-linguistic intelligence consists of the ability to think in words and to use language to express and appreciate complex meanings. Authors, poets, journalists, public speakers, and newscasters exhibit high degrees of linguistic intelligence.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

Logical-mathematical intelligence makes it possible to calculate, quantify, consider propositions and hypotheses, and carry out complex mathematical operations. Scientists, mathematicians, accountants, engineers, and computer programmers all demonstrate strong logical-mathematical intelligence.

Spatial Intelligence

Spatial intelligence instills the capacity to think in three-dimensional ways as do sailors, pilots, sculptors, painters, and architects. It enables one to perceive external and internal imagery, to recreate, transform, or modify images, to navigate oneself and objects through space, and to produce or decode graphic information.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence enables one to manipulate objects and fine-tune physical skills. It is evident in athletes, dancers, surgeons, and craftspeople.

Musical Intelligence

Musical intelligence is evident in individuals who possess a sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm, and tone. Those demonstrating this intelligence include composers, conductors, musicians, critics, and instrument makers, as well as sensitive listeners.

Interpersonal Intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence is the capacity to understand and interact effectively with others.

---

[1] Linda Campbell, et al., *Teaching and Learning through Multiple Intelligences* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1996), p. xvi.

unit introduction

Intrapersonal Intelligence

Intrapersonal intelligence refers to the ability to construct an accurate perception of oneself and to use such knowledge in planning and directing one's life.

Unit Goals

Each of the three lessons in this curriculum unit has specific learning objectives listed. These objectives have been divided into knowledge, attitude, and skill objectives for students. The following are larger goals for the curriculum unit as a whole:

- to understand the basis of identity and how it varies
- to learn about minority groups and minority-group issues in the context of Japan
- to learn to think critically and make informed opinions about a controversial subject like discrimination
- to be able to draw parallels between case studies and other situations
- to learn tools to enhance awareness and communication
- to work effectively in small and large groups

Materials

Handouts and primary source documents have been provided with lessons to present students with a range of perspectives on the topic being studied. Permission is given to reproduce these handouts and documents for classroom use only. Each lesson provides a list of materials for that lesson.

Time, Suggested Sequence of Activities

The Social Fabric of Japan: Case Studies of Selected Minority Groups is divided into 3 lessons, each of which will take at least 3 to 4 class periods to complete.

Subjects

This curriculum unit is recommended for use in social studies, history, global/international studies, contemporary issues, and minority studies classes.

Icons

For easier reference the following icons are used throughout the unit:

Small-Group Activity

Transparency

Notes to the Teacher

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Lesson One

NOTIONS OF IDENTITY

Organizing Questions

- How do we define ourselves?
- How do others define us?
- How do multiple identities create potential conflict?

Introduction

As a precursor to studying about Japan's minority groups, students need to be able not only to become familiar with minority issues on a general level, but also to understand them from a more personal perspective. Part 1 of this lesson challenges students to reflect on their own sense of identity and to think about what defines them both as individuals and as members of particular groups. Students will learn to make connections between the ways in which they think about their own identities and how these identities provide them with a feeling of belonging and with criteria for categorizing themselves and others.

Part 2 engages students in a simulation exercise in which they can begin to experience the dynamic between different identity groups that exist as part of a larger group. Students will be able to draw upon the simulation to begin discussing parallel issues in real life.

Part 3 begins by having students complete a survey evaluating their current perceptions about Japanese and American societies, and ends with a brief reading about minority groups in Japan. Students will retake the survey after the entire unit has been completed to assess how their perceptions may have changed.

Objectives

knowledge

- to learn how to identify factors that define us as individuals and as members of a particular group
- to be introduced to the topic of minority groups in Japan in the context of students' own identities and experiences

attitude

- to respect the differences in people that make us unique
- to appreciate the potential for conflict in a group consisting of smaller entities with different identities

skill

- to develop negotiating and reasoning skills in a small-group setting
- to analyze classroom experiences and be able to relate them to a global situation

lesson one

Materials

- Transparency #1, *Sources of Identity*
- Handout #1, *Group One*
- Handout #2, *Group Two*
- Handout #3, *Group Three*
- Handout #4, *Observers*
- Handout #5, *Perceptions Survey*
- Handout #6, *Minority Groups in Japan*

Time

- At least 4 class periods

Procedure Part One

1. Write on the board or overhead the following question: "What 5 things are important in defining who I am?" Ask students to think about the question for a few minutes and then to jot down their answers.

2. Now show Transparency #1 and ask students to compare their own lists to the list on the transparency. Discuss the following questions:
   - Was it difficult for you to create your list?
   - How does your list compare to the list on the transparency?
   - Does anything on your list not appear on the transparency?
   - Which elements in the list are usually used to define an individual?
   - Which elements are usually used to define groups of people?
   - Are these groups always mutually exclusive or do they sometimes overlap?

3. Divide the class into small groups of 4–5 students and ask each group to do the following activity together: "List 5 items on the that your group members have in common." Ask one person from each group to share his or her group's list with the class.

4. It is crucial to properly debrief this portion of the lesson because of the sensitive nature of the subject. Allow your students to express themselves and share their thoughts, but lead the discussion toward the acknowledgment that individuals' and groups' differences are what make us who we are. Encourage a class discussion around the following questions. Or, if you feel that students would feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts on paper, you might want to use these questions as a guidelines for writing assignments.
   - What parts of our identities feel innate? acquired or learned?
   - How does this list contribute to or take away from your sense of uniqueness?
   - What is the difference between being "labeled" by other people and "identifying" ourselves?
   - Which aspects of our identities are most influential in our daily lives? Why?
   - Which aspects of our identities do we think about less frequently? Why?
   - In what ways can a deep understanding of our identities help us to understand other people's perspectives?

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Part Two About Simulations

A simulation is an important learning activity that involves students in roles where they must think and act in a situation which is similar to one in real life. Although never able to duplicate the complexity of a real event or teach specific facts, a simulation may allow students to exercise some of the problem-solving skills and experience some of the feelings that occur in a real event. A simulation should never be treated as "only a game." Good simulations have the capacity to generate very strong thoughts and feelings in their participants, and the teacher should always be prepared for that possibility.

The role of the teacher in a simulation is critical. The teacher serves as an orientation leader and a facilitator. It is important to experience the simulation yourself before introducing it to your students. Invite your friends or colleagues to participate with you.

A simulation is run most successfully when participants have had a clear, concise introduction to its framework. As rules and roles are explained, time should be allowed for questions and practice. The facilitator should avoid comments or answers that suggest strategies or imply outcomes.

During the simulation, the facilitator should carefully observe the proceedings and take notes that might help the debriefing. Because of the open-ended structure of a simulation, the students will sometimes select strategies that don't work, and communication may sometimes be tense and difficult. Unless the participants' safety is jeopardized, the facilitator should not coach or intervene in the interaction and should allow students the opportunity to solve problems directly.

Debriefing a simulation is essential. Unless there is adequate time for debriefing, a simulation should not be attempted. The absence of a debriefing, or an inadequate one may leave a residue of misunderstanding and misinformation, which may have negative consequences both inside and outside the classroom. Equally important is the opportunity for reflection and learning. Debriefing questions are provided with the simulation, and they include questions that elicit the following:

- a description of what happened
- strategies that were attempted and their results
- other strategies that might have been possible
- analogies to real-life situations and a discussion of how the simulation was similar or different
- how the situation related to the students' own values and their subsequent actions during the simulation
- how the participants felt during the simulation and how they are feeling afterward (both as members of groups in which they participated during the simulation and as individuals)

Traditional evaluation methods generally are not appropriate for simulations. Students should never be evaluated for their participation in the simulation itself. Many teachers have found an effective evaluation activity to be a journal entry or other writing exercise in which students summarize their insights from the activity and its debriefing.

lesson one

Simulations are often noisy and sometimes confusing because of the uncertainty of the outcome. They require considerable flexibility. Yet their potential for developing deeper understandings of key concepts and increased skills in decision making, communication, negotiation, and conflict management remains high, making them an important learning tool.

Procedures

1. Select 3 students who will act as observers, numbered 1 through 3, according to the group they will be observing. Distribute one copy of Handout #4 to each of the observers.

2. Divide the remaining students into the following groups and make sure there is enough space in the classroom to allow each group its own section of the room.
   Group 1: the majority or dominant group, constituting 60 percent of the class
   Group 2: a minority group constituting 25 percent of the class
   Group 3: a minority group constituting 15 percent of the class

3. Distribute copies of Handouts #1–3 to each corresponding group (Handout #1 to Group 1, Handout #2 to Group 2, etc.), as well as all the materials they will need for the simulation (butcher paper, colored paper, felt pens, crayons, scissors, tape, etc.). Each student in a group should have a copy of the same handout. Instruct students to read over the instructions and then begin their task. Remind students that they have 30 minutes.

4. Ask each group to present their flag and their song as well as other group symbols to the rest of the class. Tell them to explain to the rest of the class what these symbols represent and how they feel about them.

5. After each group has presented, tell the students that they will now go back to their groups to create one flag and one song as well as other symbols that would represent the identity of the class as a whole.

6. After about 10 minutes, announce that the principal has decided to divide the class into two separate classes. Arrange the new classes as follows:
   Class A: Group 2 + Group 3 + 1/4 of Group 1
   Class B: The remaining 3/4 of Group 1

   Observers 2 and 3 will follow Groups 2 and 3 to Class A, and Observer 1 will be with Class B.

7. Tell the new "classes" that they will now have 10 minutes to create one flag and one class song as well as other symbols that would represent the identity of the newly formed classes. Again, the flag, the song, and other symbols have to represent the identity of their newly formed class as a whole.

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In order to create enough room for individual interpretation by the players, and to allow students to make personal decisions, the guidelines and directions for this part of the simulation are intentionally vague. During the debriefing, the observers will be asked how students made decisions both within their own groups and between the groups (e.g., did the groups make decisions democratically? Did a leader emerge within a group who manipulated the decisions of that group? How did the majority group deal with the minority groups?).

8. Debriefing is the most important part of this activity, for it allows students to reflect upon the thoughts and feelings generated by the activity and hopefully to obtain the beginning of an understanding of both the inclusionary and exclusionary—the unifying and the destructive—potential of rallying to one's own group identity. Since the obvious aim of a simulation is to replicate real-life situations, the ultimate purpose of the debriefing is to encourage students to draw parallels between the activity and real life.

9. After asking some general questions about how students felt during the simulation, ask the observers to report back to the class. You might then want to ask the whole class some of the following questions:

   About intragroup interactions:
   - How did you make decisions within your group? (*By majority? Was there a leader who forced his or her opinion onto the rest of the group? Did the group follow his or her directions?*)
   - How did leaders develop within your group?
   - How did you feel about the decision of your group? (*Did you identify and agree with the decision? If not, did you feel you had to conform?*)
   - How did you experience your group/the other two groups? (*Is your group homogeneous or diverse? How did you perceive the other two groups?*)

   About intergroup interactions:
   - How did the 3 groups interact with each other, before and after the principal decided to divide the class into two? (*Did each group send a representative or two depending on their representation within the class? Did your group act collectively, or did individual members of the groups interact with each other? What other strategies might you have tried?*)
   - Was it easy to solve the conflict? Why did it seem to be so difficult to reach a compromise between the 3 groups when it came to designing a class flag and creating a class song? (*When conflicts are between identity groups, the conflict is over basic values and beliefs that cannot be bargained over or negotiated.*)
   - Did all 3 groups agree on a common flag and song? If so, how did each group feel? How did each group feel after the principal divided the original class into two? (*Did the minority groups feel like they lost their identity? How did the former members of the majority group feel when they were grouped with the minorities?*)

- What are other possible developments in this conflict? (*The dominant group might choose its symbols and song for the entire class and force the minority groups to give up theirs. The dominant group could try to force the minority groups out of the classroom. The minority groups could try to separate and try to form their own classes and get their own classrooms. Each group could be allowed to keep its symbols in its area of the classroom, and they could create a common flag and song for the entire class.*)

About the simulation overall:

- How do you think the kinds of things you experienced in this activity did or did not correlate to real life? Explain.
- How did the situation relate to your own values and subsequent actions during the simulation?
- How did you feel during the simulation and how do you feel now that it is over? (both as individuals and as members of groups)

10. To bring this lesson to a close, assign a journal-writing activity by asking students to comment on one of the following questions:
    - Should a majority impose its will on a minority? If so, to what extent is such an imposition justified?
    - How far may a minority go in preserving its traditions without diminishing unity?
    - Where does "minority identity" end and "majority loyalty" begin?
    - How might the existence of minority advocacy groups and laws to protect minorities actually perpetuate discriminatory attitudes?

Part Three

1. This part of the lesson is intended to assess what students currently perceive of Japanese society. Later, after students have completed the entire curriculum unit, they will be able to reassess their ideas. Begin this part of the lesson by distributing Handout #1, *Perceptions and Misperceptions*, to each student. Give students about 15 minutes to fill out the survey.

2. When students have completed this task, go through each statement as a class and ask some students to share their responses and explanations. Do most students agree with each other or are there many statements for which students had mixed reactions?

3. Collect the surveys and save them to reevaluate after the entire unit is completed so students can see how their views may have changed.

4. Share with students that they will be learning about 4 minority groups in Japan. Start with a discussion based on the following questions:
    - Share some of the things you know about Japanese society.
    - When you hear the word "minorities" do you think of Japan? Or do you think of another country or society?
    - Using what you learned in the simulation exercise, describe some social issues you think are related to minorities.

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5. Handout #6 is a general overview of minorities in Japan. Distribute it to each student to read. After students have read the handout, debrief the lesson with a discussion around the following questions:
   - Is there anything you would like to add to the definition of a "minority group" that you think is important?
   - The reading defines a minority group as not necessarily being a numerical minority. Can you think of examples where this is so? (*Blacks in South Africa are the numerical majority, but are still politically and socially subordinate to whites.*)
   - The reading mentions that society has the choice of either eliminating or tolerating the minority. What do you think this means? Give examples.
   - Were many of the perceptions you recorded in the survey inaccurate?
   - What do you hope to gain from learning about minority groups in Japan?
   - What general minority issues do you feel are particularly important?

transparency #1

SOURCES OF IDENTITY

Age
Class
Country of origin
Culture
Disability
Education
Ethnicity/Race
Family
Family background
Gender
Health
History
Hobbies
Language
Lineage
Money/Socioeconomic class
Occupation
Personality
Physical appearance
Place of residence
Religion
Sexual orientation
Skills
Weight
Other

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GROUP ONE

Your History

You have been sitting together as a group in this part of the classroom for many years. You like your area—it means a lot to you. You hold very similar values, believe in the same things, like the same music and the same clothes, and after class you all engage in the same sport. Over the years you have even created special greetings when you meet each other.

Your Identity

Of course you are all in the same class, but it's the belonging to this particular group that really matters to you. The sense of group belonging that you have developed over the years and your values and beliefs are reflected in certain symbolic activities and objects. For instance you all like the color yellow, and the shape of circles has a very special meaning to you and your group. It's difficult for you to understand how anyone could like another color or shape.

Your Task

The principal in your school has announced a schoolwide competition in which each class will present a flag and a song reflecting its identity to a jury of teachers who will visit all the classes in the school. This will be a special occasion and each class is expected to decorate its classroom and wear the clothes that represent their class.

Since you feel very strongly about your group's identity, you want the class flag and song, as well as your classroom, to reflect your own views, opinions, beliefs, and practices.

As a group:

- Discuss and decide which things you consider important in defining your group and in creating a sense of unity and pride.
- Discuss and design a flag and other symbolic objects that will reflect your group's identity.
- Create a song that will represent the values and identity of your group.

Remember that the color yellow and the shape of circles mean a lot to you and your group.

Time and Procedures

You will have 30 minutes for your task. Decide in your group how you will proceed with your task and who will be responsible for which part of the group task.

You will then have to introduce your flag and your song, as well as other symbols that represent your identity. Be prepared to explain to the class what these things mean to you and why you feel strongly that they should be chosen for the class theme.

handout #2

GROUP TWO

Your History

You have been sitting together as a group in this part of the classroom for many years. You like your area—it means a lot to you. You hold very similar values, believe in the same things, like the same music and the same clothes, and after class you all engage in the same sport. Over the years you have even created special greetings when you meet each other.

Your Identity

Of course you are all in the same class, but it's the belonging to this particular group that really matters to you. The sense of group belonging that you have developed over the years and your values and beliefs are reflected in certain symbolic activities and objects. For instance you all like the color red, and the shape of squares has a very special meaning to you and your group. It's difficult for you to understand how anyone could like another color or shape.

Your Task

The principal in your school has announced a schoolwide competition in which each class will present a flag and a song reflecting its identity to a jury of teachers who will visit all the classes in the school. This will be a special occasion and each class is expected to decorate its classroom and wear the clothes that represent their class.

Since you feel very strongly about your group's identity, you want the class flag and song, as well as your classroom, to reflect your own views, opinions, beliefs, and practices.

As a group:

- Discuss and decide which things you consider important in defining your group and in creating a sense of unity and pride.
- Discuss and design a flag and other symbolic objects that will reflect your group's identity.
- Create a song that will represent the values and identity of your group.

Remember that the color red and the shape of squares mean a lot to you and your group.

Time and Procedures

You will have 30 minutes for your task. Decide in your group how you will proceed with your task and who will be responsible for which part of the group task.

You will then have to introduce your flag and your song, as well as other symbols that represent your identity. Be prepared to explain to the class what these things mean to you and why you feel strongly that they should be chosen for the class theme.

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GROUP THREE

Your History

You have been sitting together as a group in this part of the classroom for many years. You like your area—it means a lot to you. You hold very similar values, believe in the same things, like the same music and the same clothes, and after class you all engage in the same sport. Over the years you have even created special greetings when you meet each other.

Your Identity

Of course you are all in the same class, but it's the belonging to this particular group that really matters to you. The sense of group belonging that you have developed over the years and your values and beliefs are reflected in certain symbolic activities and objects. For instance you all like the color blue, and the shape of triangles has a very special meaning to you and your group. It's difficult for you to understand how anyone could like another color or shape.

Your Task

The principal in your school has announced a schoolwide competition in which each class will present a flag and a song reflecting its identity to a jury of teachers who will visit all the classes in the school. This will be a special occasion and each class is expected to decorate its classroom and wear the clothes that represent their class.

Since you feel very strongly about your group's identity, you want the class flag and song, as well as your classroom, to reflect your own views, opinions, beliefs, and practices.

As a group:

- Discuss and decide which things you consider important in defining your group and in creating a sense of unity and pride.
- Discuss and design a flag and other symbolic objects that will reflect your group's identity.
- Discuss and create a song that will represent the values and identity of your group.

Remember that the color blue and the shape of triangles mean a lot to you and your group.

Time and Procedures

You will have 30 minutes for your task. Decide in your group how you will proceed with your task and who will be responsible for which part of the group task.

You will then have to introduce your flag and your song, as well as other symbols that represent your identity. Be prepared to explain to the class what these things mean to you and why you feel strongly that they should be chosen for the class theme.

handout #4

OBSERVERS

The group you are observing was given the task to create a flag and a song that will reflect the identity of their class and will be used in a schoolwide competition. After 30 minutes, your group will present its flag and song to the rest of the class. The final goal is that the entire class will come up with one song and one flag for the entire class.

After all the groups have presented their flags and songs, and after they have tried to come up with one flag and one song for the entire class, the principal decided to split the class into 2 classes.

As observer, you must pay careful attention to the activities going on in your group. You will be asked to report back to the class on what you observe. Use the following questions as guidelines on what to watch for:

- How did your group reach a decision?
- Did any leaders develop in your group? If so, how did they develop?
- How did your group interact with the other groups?

Use the space below to take notes. Be prepared to share your observations with the class later. Use additional paper if necessary.

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PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being *strongly agree* and 5 being *strongly disagree*, rate your feelings regarding these statements. In the space below each statement, explain your choice.

1. Japan is a homogeneous country.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. The United States is a heterogeneous country.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Japan is a classless society.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. There are no minorities in Japan.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. There are many minorities in the United States.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. The United States has laws to protect its minorities.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Poverty does not exist in Japan.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Everyone in Japan speaks Japanese.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Japan is a meritocracy (a system in which the talented are chosen and moved ahead on the basis of their achievement).
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The United States is a meritocracy.
    1 2 3 4 5

handout #6

MINORITY GROUPS IN JAPAN

subordinate—placed in or occupying a lower class, rank, or position; inferior

Generally defined, a minority group is a culturally, ethnically, or racially distinct group living within a larger society. As a term used by politicians and social scientists, a minority is necessarily subordinate to the dominant group within a society. This subordinacy, rather than a numerical minority, is the chief defining characteristic of a minority group. Politically, minority groups are less powerful than the dominant group. Sociologically, minority groups are distinct social groups, with specific, easily recognizable characteristics that mark them off from the rest of society. Society as a whole has two options when confronted with the presence of a minority group—the minority can either be eliminated or tolerated. What has become of the minority groups that live in Japan?

homogeneous—of uniform composition

meritocratic—promotion based on talent and achievement

classlessness—the state of being free from distinctions of a social class

Japan has long held the reputation of being an ethnically homogeneous and harmonious nation. For many years, this view was widely accepted without question and promoted by Western scholars as well as the Japanese people and government. During the 1980s, Japan's explosive economic growth was attributed to factors such as the Japanese people's group-directed quest for knowledge (Vogel, 1979: 27), its extraordinary educational system, its meritocratic system of achievement and success, the society's degree of equality and classlessness, and overall group solidarity. Indeed, on a general level, these factors may well have played important roles in Japan's overall economic success.

social hierarchy—a system of classification of social groups based on ability or economic or social standing

dynamic—pattern or process of change, growth, or activity

dichotomous—dividing into 2 parts

However, a more focused analysis of this success reveals the inner workings of a complex social hierarchy; and it becomes clear that Japanese society is sharply divided along distinct lines of status and power, majority and minority. Exposed is the uncomfortable coexistence of the overwhelmingly large majority of "Japanese" people and a much smaller contingency of minority groups. This uneasy social dynamic between the majority and minorities makes apparent the dichotomous nature of Japanese society, the insider versus outsider mentality, majority versus the minorities, the official policies versus unofficial practice.

pariah—outcast

Japan's population is in fact overwhelmingly homogeneous, considering over 96 percent of the people belong to the majority and all of these people are ethnic Japanese. The rest of the population is loosely categorized as "minorities," most of whom are of non-Japanese descent such as the Chinese, Taiwanese, Koreans, Ainu, and Okinawans. Still, not all minorities are foreigners; there are also ethnic Japanese in this category—the *burakumin* whose pariah status established centuries ago still exists and the Japanese immigrants from Latin America whose distinctly Latin American culture sets them apart. Many also consider Japanese women to be minorities because their rights and privileges are limited compared with those of their male counterparts.

marginalized—excluded from or existing outside of mainstream society

While these groups may not share much in common with each other on a superficial level, they do share the common experience of living in Japan as marginalized members of society. How have these groups' historical

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legacies contributed to their sense of identity? What other factors are critical to the identity formation and perpetuation of these minority groups? Keep these questions in mind as you read about Japan's minority groups.

Lesson Two

THE BURAKUMIN

Organizing Questions

- What is the basis of identity and how is it related to discrimination?
- How are boundaries between identity groups drawn and enforced in society?
- Who are the *burakumin*?
- How have historical legacies affected *burakumin* identity?

Introduction

The *burakumin* are Japan's largest minority group and their experience in Japan illustrates the extent to which historical legacies can affect one's identity, sometimes even for centuries. This lesson challenges students to analyze the conflicts that often accompany *burakumin* identity and how these conflicts are handled and addressed.

In Part 1, students examine their own identities and compare the ways in which they identify themselves versus how they are defined by society. They begin to draw connections between identity and discrimination, the definitions of each, and the complexities of their interrelatedness.

Part 2 introduces the *burakumin* and engages students in a series of discussions and activities that examine different aspects of minority identity. Students transition from discussions about Japan's minorities to more general discussions about minorities in other societies.

Objectives

knowledge

- to grasp the connections between how people identify themselves and how they are identified by others
- to gain basic knowledge about the *burakumin*

attitude

- to understand the complexities of identity and discrimination
- to maintain an open-minded approach to discussing sensitive issues such as discrimination

skill

- to use critical-thinking skills in drawing parallels from a case study of Japan to other situations
- to analyze data and be able to draw conclusions from it

lesson two

Materials

- Identifier Cards
- Handout #1, *The Burakumin*
- Individual Activity Cards #1 and 2
- Group Activity Cards #1–3
- Resource Cards #1–2

Time

- At least 4 class periods

Teacher Preparation

1. Make one set of Identifier Cards for each student.
2. Make one copy of Handout #1 for each student.
3. Make one copy of Individual Activity Card #1 for each student.
4. Make one copy of Individual Activity Card #2 for each student.
5. Determine the number of small groups (3–4 students per small group) and make the appropriate number of copies of Group Activity Cards #1–3. (There are 3 identical copies of the Group Activity Card #1 on page 35 to expedite copying.)
6. Determine the number of small groups (3–4 students per small group) and make the appropriate number of copies of Resource Cards #1 and 2.

Procedure Part One

1. Inform students that this lesson will build upon the knowledge they acquired in the last lesson. They will be considering the identity of Japan's largest minority group, the *burakumin*. More specifically, they will be evaluating the historical legacies that helped shape their identity and subsequent social status.

2. The opening activity should be done individually because of the personal and sensitive nature of the topic of discrimination. Distribute one set of Identifier Cards to each student. Each set of cards is a list of factors that can possibly influence or be the basis for discrimination. (The cards are the same as the "Sources of Identity" list from Lesson 1.)

3. Ask students to glance through their cards and engage the class in a brief discussion to set the context for the activity. Use the following questions as a guide:
   - Can anyone give me a definition of what they think discrimination is?
   - What is your initial impression of these cards?
   - What is the significance of this list being identical to the "sources of identity" list from Lesson 1? (*Discuss the point that from another perspective, factors that identify a person can also be used to differentiate him or her from "the rest of society." Sometimes this differentiation takes the form of differential treatment, whether this means being given special privileges or being treated unfairly. Reiterate the difference between identifying oneself versus being identified by others.*)

4. Now, instruct students to rank these cards in the order that they feel most accurately reflects the way they are identified by others in their own society.

5. Next, ask students to study the list and consider the following 2 questions:
   - Which factor do you think is the most influential in terms of *causing* discrimination in your society and/or personal experience?
   - Which factor do you think is the most influential in terms of *perpetuating* discrimination in your society and/or personal experience?

6. Since these are intensely personal questions and answers, make it optional for students to share their answers aloud out of respect for their privacy. For those who would like to share their thoughts with the class, use the following questions as a guide. Otherwise, encourage students to reflect upon these questions in their journals.
   - Does society define you the same way you define yourself? How are the definitions similar or different? Why do you think this is so? How does this make you feel?
   - Do you identify yourself differently in different situations?
   - Did you find it difficult to rank the items in the list?
   - Do you think that the factors that cause and perpetuate discrimination are the same or different? Why?
   - Notions of discrimination vary from group to group, person to person, etc. Why do you think this is so?

Part Two

Inform students that this part of the lesson will introduce them to the *burakumin*, Japan's largest minority group, and will trace the group's history from the time they were "identified" by society as minority people, what this meant, and how this historical legacy has contributed to their identity today.

1. Distribute one copy of Handout #1 and Individual Activities #1 and #2 to each student to complete on their own. Allow students to share their work if they wish. Otherwise, assign these activities as homework or journal-writing activities.

2. After students have finished reading the handouts, divide students into small groups of 3–4 students and distribute one copy of Group Activity #2 to each group. Students may present their work when finished if time allows. Otherwise, proceed to the discussion.

3. Handout #1 is rather complex and touches upon many weighty issues, so it is important to discuss it as a class before proceeding to the next few activities. Use the following questions to discuss the reading as a class:
   - What were some of the ways the *burakumin* were identified by society both in the past and the present? (*occupation, place of residence, name, marriage, style of dress, social behavior, etc.*)
   - What did you find particularly striking about the history of the *burakumin*?
   - How does identity play a role in the lives of the *burakumin*?
   - Why was the identification of the *burakumin* so important in the past? Now?

- How has the method of identifying *burakumin* changed over the years?
- What kinds of psychological pressures accompany *burakumin* status? (*fear, guilt, frustration, etc.*)
- What are some of the improvements that have been made?
- What are some of the government's efforts toward eliminating discrimination?
- Does the situation of the *burakumin* remind you of any other minority group issues in your own society? (*You may choose to bring up the point that many scholars compare the* burakumin *in Japan to African Americans in the United States. Some also compare the* burakumin *to homosexuals. Encourage student discussion, but be careful to facilitate the discussion in a way that is sensitive to all students. If you feel that these questions are too sensitive to be discussed aloud, perhaps this can be made into a writing assignment.*)

3. Reassemble students into their small groups for Group Activity #3. This activity requires students to evaluate a set of statistics in order to assess the situation of the *burakumin* as opposed to non-*burakumin* in Japan. Each group will represent a certain perspective which may or may not influence the way it interprets the data. Assign 2 groups to be Group A, 2 groups to be Group B, and 2 groups to be Group C. Distribute a copy of the appropriate Group Activity #3 card to each group. Next distribute a copy of Resource Cards #1 and #2 to each group.

4. Allow groups to present their activities. Encourage student discussion about the varying perspectives of each group. For the *burakumin* and non-*burakumin* groups (Groups A and B), use the following questions as a guide:
   - How did the identity of your group influence the way you interpreted the data?
   - Was it difficult to be objective about the data?
   - Did you find the data to be encouraging or discouraging?
   - Do you feel that progress has been made regarding your group's "cause"?

   For the government groups (Group C), use the following questions:
   - Did you find it difficult to please both the *burakumin* and non-*burakumin*?
   - What strategies did you use to try to appeal to both the *burakumin* and non-*burakumin* groups?

   For all groups:
   - Look at the data carefully. Note that while drastic improvements have been made in the housing sector, the employment sector is still unfavorable to the *burakumin*, as are certain aspects of the education sector. What does this indicate to you about the challenges of eliminating discrimination? (*It is relatively easy to make physical improvements such as building new homes and funding public-works projects, but changing social aspects of discrimination is slower and more difficult because of longtime causes and effects of discrimination that have affected* burakumin *in these areas.*)

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- What is your reaction to the statement "Anti-discrimination efforts actually end up perpetuating the same discrimination they are trying to eradicate."
- Do you think it is possible to eliminate discrimination entirely?

5. The last activity challenges students to verbalize their thoughts on discrimination and to reevaluate common misperceptions about minority groups and the issues that surround them. There are 10 statements. Cut out and distribute one card to each group. Allow students to present their activities to the class.

6. Debriefing this lesson is a crucial step in getting students to think deeply and critically about controversial issues that surround minority groups. Engage students in a discussion using the following questions as a guide. These questions and discussion points are meant only as a guide and it is up to you as the teacher to facilitate the discussion in a way that is most appropriate for your students.
   - In the beginning of this lesson, you explored ways in which you identified yourselves and society identifies you. How do you think a *burakumin* would identify himself or herself and how would society identify them?
   - Share any thoughts you have regarding the reasons why society originally ostracized the *burakumin* and why this group continues to experience discrimination today. Challenge students to question the logic or rationality behind the way boundaries are drawn and enforced regarding the *burakumin*. Make the transition into discussing the way boundaries are drawn and enforced in other societies. Encourage students to make comparisons and observations.
   - The original term "eta" was abolished in 1871 and replaced with another term. What overall effect did this name change have on the *burakumin*'s status? Discuss the nature of labels and terminology and whether or not these erase deep-rooted beliefs that people have held for generations.
   - Discuss how being Japanese and being a *burakumin* might create identity conflicts for a person. How would a dual identity like this be problematic? Encourage students to reflect on their own identities, whether or not they also grapple with multiple identities, and if so, how they deal with it.
   - As Davis pointed out in his research, outside of Japan the *burakumin* identify themselves as a minority group. Within Japan, they attack the idea that they are any different from other Japanese. Why do you think they do this? Can students think of situations in their own lives where they identify themselves differently depending on the situation? Discuss the fluidity of identity, its functions, its definitions, its interpretations, its shifting boundaries and terms, etc.
   - Discuss the efforts the Japanese government has made to combat discrimination. Have they been successful? What types of efforts have been made to combat discrimination in students' own society? Have they been successful?
   - What are the obstacles to eliminating discrimination?

identifier cards

Culture	Race
History	Money
Family background	Occupation
Sexual orientation	Gender

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Age	Personality
Place of residence	Education
Disability	Lineage
Health	Weight

identifier cards

Religion	Class
Language	Hobbies
Other: _____(list)	Other: _____(list)

THE BURAKUMIN

hamlet—a small village

The *burakumin* (literally translated as "hamlet people") are Japan's largest minority group, numbering somewhere between 1.2 million and 3 million. The most distinguishing aspect of the *burakumin* is that they are ethnically Japanese, but are still subject to various types of prejudice and discrimination because of the way society has identified them as a group for hundreds of years.

It is not clearly known when and why this group became differentiated from the rest of the Japanese population, but many theories exist as to their origin. The most widely accepted theory asserts that the origins of the *burakumin* can be traced to the 8th century A.D., when they were known and treated as "eta" (meaning "pollution abundant") because of religious ideas about purity and pollution.

defiled—contaminated

kinship—the state of being related through family

Many cultures have an idea, in one form or another, that the inner essence of humans can be either pure or defiled. Purity and pollution become matters of general concern because pollution is believed in many countries to be contagious by physical contact or proximity, and also by means of kinship ties, intermarriage, and tainted bloodlines. Many cultures have their own particular definitions of what is pure and impure. In Japan, pollution has been believed to occur in both physical and symbolic form depending on the political, social, and religious climate of the time.

Shinto—the native religion of Japan that worships the deities of natural forces and venerates the Emperor as a descendant of the sun goddess

Around the 8th century A.D. in Japan, Shinto and Buddhist beliefs about purity and pollution deemed occupations related to blood and death (funeral workers, butchers, leather workers, etc.) to be highly contaminating. Thus, the people engaged in such work were regarded as unclean and untouchable, though the exact occupations that were considered to be polluting varied from region to region. The public shunned these workers, fearful of becoming contaminated, and a pattern of residential segregation began to emerge as a means of separating them from society.

Confucian—a political and philosophical belief system from China

institutionalized—incorporated into a structured and highly formalized system

social order—structure of society

outcastes—one that does not belong to a caste. In the *burakumin's* case, they existed outside of the caste-like social order.

During the feudalistic Edo, or Tokugawa, period (1603–1868), the Confucian-inspired government established a fixed hierarchical status system that formalized and institutionalized many of the practices that divided people into groups. While the origins of these beliefs coincide with periods of strong religious influence, the perpetuation of these beliefs can be attributed to political and social changes that occurred in Japan. The new social order operated much like a caste, where status was fixed and hereditary and marriage was permitted only among members of the same social group. From highest to lowest status were the warriors, farmers, artisans, and merchants. The status of the *eta* was even lower than the merchants as they existed outside the formalized social order. They became outcastes.

As ethnic Japanese, the *eta* were physically indistinguishable from the rest of society. Hence, it became important for them to be easily identifiable. The Edo government enforced numerous regulations that rigidly controlled the occupation, residence, marriage, style of dress, and

social behavior of the outcastes. They were permitted to work in only those occupations thought to be polluting, demanding, and hence undesirable and their residency was limited to designated hamlets (or *buraku*, hence the term *burakumin*). In earlier days, they were sometimes given names that marked them as *eta*.

The Meiji period (1868–1912) that followed marked a significant turning point in Japan's history, politically, economically, and socially. After spending the entire Edo period in isolation, Japan opened its borders to the outside world. The Western thought and influence that poured in disrupted the traditional Confucian world view and prompted massive political, economic, and social reforms. One of the most significant pieces of legislation that impacted the *eta* resulted when the new government dismantled the complex feudal social order.

feudal social order—a vertical political, economic, and social system characterized by service from those below in exchange for rewards from those above.

In 1871, the government issued the Edict of Emancipation. It abolished the class of *eta* and declared that all people belonging to the *eta* class should be treated in the same manner both in occupation and social standing as the common people. From this point on, the *eta* were referred to as "burakumin." The purpose of the edict was more about the government's desire to consolidate power and to reclassify the *eta* as tax-paying commoners. It was less about promoting social change since simple legislation was hardly sufficient to change social attitudes of discrimination built up over the centuries (De Vos and Wagatsuma, 1966: 34).

emancipation—the act of freeing from restraint, control, or power of another

common people—persons not of noble rank or special status

commoners—see "common people"

Being designated as "new" commoners simply signaled to all that they were former *eta*. So rather than eradicating the *eta* class, the government in effect institutionalized it because it was the same government that established the household register system that recorded the household information of all the "new" commoners. Both the newly enacted household register (*koseki*) system and the specially designated hamlets for this group contributed to the continued identification of the former *eta* class. The register system applied to all citizens, who were required by law to record not only their place of birth but also every change in address. This system became a guaranteed method of identifying *burakumin* because their *buraku* origins could always be traced through the registry no matter how many times they changed residences.

eradicating—doing away with completely

The changes that occurred in the Meiji period and after World War II brought about economic hardships that particularly affected the middle and lower classes. Amidst these times of difficulty and discontent various *burakumin* associations arose, the most prominent of which was the Leveler's Society (*Suiheisha*), dedicated to promoting respect for human dignity. This organization evolved into the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) of today.

Japan's defeat in World War II marked a significant turning point in the *burakumin*'s struggle against discrimination. With the signing of the new national Constitution in 1946, major democratic reforms were made. Most importantly, it declared that all forms of discrimination based on social status should be fought and abolished. In an atmosphere of growing democratic consciousness, advocacy organizations like the BLL gained more momentum and power, yielding such important results as

organized committees and projects that dealt specifically with *burakumin* issues. These were the first specific policies for improving the situation of the *burakumin*, mainly improving living conditions and instituting integration programs intended to spread understanding of discrimination problems.

integration—incorporation as equals into society

Discrimination in marriage and employment still exists, although discrimination in employment is illegal. The tendency for *burakumin* to only marry other *burakumin* still exists and stories of broken relationships, engagements, and marriages between *burakumin* and non-*burakumin* are not uncommon. Usually this happens when one's *burakumin* background is uncovered, either through deliberate investigation or voluntary confession. Also common are tales of thwarted job applications due to background investigations that reveal one's *burakumin* identity.

Both of these situations point to the practice of social passing, where one moves into the "mainstream" while trying to cover all indications of one's origins in the *buraku*. Passing, or attempting to pass, carries heavy psychological burdens in addition to the sometimes tragic consequences of getting caught. Lately it has become easier for *burakumin* to pass since household registries have recently been made inaccessible to the public, and records date back only 3 generations. Still, this does not guarantee that they will not be identified since determined parties can resort to illegal means to obtain the information they want. Private detectives are sometimes hired for prenuptial and employee investigations, and more notorious are the "*buraku* name lists" that have been circulated among some of Japan's largest corporations. Sometimes, descendants of *burakumin* do not even know they are of *burakumin* descent until it is revealed through an investigation. Many people do not learn of their *burakumin* background until they are in their teens, an indication that parents are not always eager to discuss these things with their children.

prenuptial—made or occurring before marriage

From the early 1900s to the present, advocacy organizations have been formed, government committees have been established, educational programs have been implemented, and laws have been passed to protect and guarantee the rights of minorities—all toward the greater goal of eliminating discrimination. The actual process has not been smooth however, and progress is slow.

John Davis, a doctoral student at Stanford University researching *burakumin*, has found that while the BLL actively presents the *burakumin* as a "minority" in international circles, within Japan it attacks the idea that they are different from other Japanese. In fact, it emphasizes their "Japanese-ness" in the hopes of lessening discrimination. Since other "minorities" in Japan cannot make the same claims of authentic "Japanese-ness," this has led to some tension between the groups. At the same time, being of Japanese descent raises complicated issues of ambiguous identity for *burakumin*.

ambiguous—uncertain; capable of being understood in more than one way

According to Davis, this ambiguity of *burakumin* identity is compounded by the fact that a high percentage of people living in large *buraku* are non-*burakumin* who have moved in for various reasons and thereafter have become known as *burakumin* because of where they live. Today, in urban

homogeneous—of uniform composition

areas, the criterion for defining and identifying the *burakumin* has shifted almost exclusively to residence. This brings to light an important point about today's *burakumin*—they are not the homogeneous group they are often perceived to be. They may live in the same *buraku*, but may not necessarily share the same ancestry, occupation, cultural and ethnic background, political beliefs, etc., yet they face the same issues associated with their *burakumin* identity.

The government still does not explicitly acknowledge the existence of minority groups in Japan, but it no longer outright denies their existence either. Minority issues are downplayed, and there is still considerable dispute over the way the government is handling these matters. For example, official figures count only 1.2 million *burakumin* living in 4,603 *buraku* whereas estimates made by the BLL count over 3 million *burakumin* living in over 6,000 *buraku*. Many *burakumin* feel that a discrepancy such as this results in an inadequate amount of government funding for *burakumin* projects.

There is no doubt that living conditions for *buraku* citizens have improved drastically over the last 20 years, and that overall statistical discrepancies of income and education are no longer as prominent. *Buraku* slums with no running water or sewers have largely disappeared and integration projects are actively endorsed by the government (Kitaguchi, 1999: 37).

As national spending on anti-discrimination projects increases, charges of "reverse discrimination" are being voiced by non-*burakumin* who have found themselves at the short end of urban improvement budgets. Such accusations raise the issue of whether anti-discrimination efforts actually end up perpetuating the same discrimination they are trying to eradicate. The Special Measures Law, originally passed in 1969 to ameliorate *burakumin* living conditions and to eliminate discrimination through education, expired in 1997 after several renewals. The BLL decided not to push for its renewal because these laws were so successful in resolving many of the tangible housing and education problems faced by the *burakumin*.

While visible markers of discrimination have decreased considerably and the younger generations show clear signs of being more tolerant, many *burakumin* still point to the government's failure to take a tough stand against discrimination by penalizing those who discriminate. Fortunately, discrimination is less acceptable today in Japan not only because of a more educated society, but also because of Japan's prominent role in the international arena and the increased accountability this entails. As part of a larger global community, Japanese society is increasingly subject to international scrutiny and criticism. And yet, as with many societies around the world, it remains to be seen whether or not discrimination can truly be erased.

Individual Activity #1

"Hometown" by Maruoka Tadao

Like a guard dog, my father always kept his hometown secret
Of friends, he never welcomed a second time,
Once the secret of their hometown got out
And others jilted by their lovers
Who had learnt the secret of their hometown
Now it's up to you, my daughter
Be proud of your hometown, proclaim it to the world
With your head held up high and confident,
Yell it out to the whole world, "This is my hometown!"

(From the intermediate school reading book *Ningen*)

Choose one of the following titles and write your own poem based on what you think the title means. Write from the perspective of a *burakumin*.

- Freedom
- Status
- Democracy
- Hiding
- Me
- Pride

Reprinted from Kitaguchi, Suehiro, (1999). *An Introduction to the Buraku Issue: Questions and Answers*. Surrey, England: The Japan Library, p. 69.

individual activity card #2

Individual Activity #2

This sign was erected at the entrance to a temple in 1876, 5 years after the Edict of Emancipation was passed. Imagine that you are a *burakumin* living in the city where this temple is located. Describe your feelings upon seeing this sign at the entrance to your hometown temple. What are your thoughts on the Edict of Emancipation? Do you feel "emancipated" by the new law? Write a letter to the temple to voice your feelings.

Kuboi Norio

The sign reads: "Polluted Ones Not Allowed"

Photograph reprinted from Kuboi, Norio, (1993). *Kindai no Sabetsu to Nihon Minshuu no Rekishi.* [Discrimination in the Modern Era and the History of the People of Japan]. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, p. 27.

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Note to Teacher: These 3 cards are identical.

Group Activity #1

With your group members, create an illustrated timeline that traces the entire history of the *burakumin* to the present.

Be sure to include information that:
- Addresses the reasons for discrimination
- Is important in the historical development of the *burakumin*
- Covers each major historical period
- Records significant political, economic, and social changes and/or events

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Group Activity #2
Group A

You and your group members are part of a *burakumin* advocacy organization. The government is planning to review the way it has addressed issues regarding the *burakumin* and you view this as an opportunity to voice your opinions. An anonymous source has provided some of the government's statistics to you, the same statistics on which it will base its upcoming review. Use this information to structure your statement. You may present your statement in any format that you feel best represents your views.

Keep the following in mind:
- Evaluate all categories thoroughly.
- Your views can be positive, negative, or a combination of both.
- Include recommendations if you feel they are necessary.

Group Activity #2
Group B

You and your group members are part of a non-*burakumin* organization that is concerned with reverse discrimination. You feel that while discrimination against *burakumin* is unacceptable, you do not like the fact that *burakumin* are entitled to certain privileges that exclude you. The government is planning to review the way it has addressed issues regarding the *burakumin* and you view this as an opportunity to voice your opinions. An anonymous source has provided some of the government's statistics to you, the same statistics on which it will base its upcoming review. Use this information to structure your statement. You may present your statement in any format that you feel best represents your views.

Keep the following in mind:
- Evaluate all categories thoroughly.
- Your views can be positive, negative, or a combination of both.
- Include recommendations if you feel they are necessary.

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Group Activity #2
Group C

You and your group members are government workers in charge of reviewing whether or not improvements have been made in regard to *burakumin* issues of employment, housing, and education. You have some preliminary statistics on which to base your report. Because of this report's sensitive nature, you must find a way to present your statistics in a way that will be the least controversial to the public. To do so, you must first be able to anticipate the public response to these findings. What do you think *burakumin* will be displeased about? Pleased about? What do you think non-*burakumin* will be displeased about? Pleased about? What is the government's opinion of progress or lack of progress?

You will be asked to make a brief (3-5 minute) statement on behalf of the government. As you prepare your statement, consider the following:

- In what order will you present the findings?
- How will you address each group's concerns?
- How will you present the information in an uncontroversial way?
- Will you highlight any information?
- Will you downplay any information?
- Do you have recommendations or any plan for further action?
- With whom will you consult?

group activity card #3

Group Activity #3

You and your group members are leading an enlightenment class intended to clarify misperceptions about *burakumin* and to educate people about discrimination. The following statements reflect some of the attitudes people have toward *burakumin* issues. Since it is your job to enlighten and inform people, think of a creative way to counter your statement or question. Whatever you create (song, skit, role-play, story, lecture, poster, poem, etc.), you will have to present it to the class.

Of course anti-*buraku* discrimination occurred during the Edo period, because of the caste system which operated then. But surely not in today's democratic society?

We've got a modern, democratic constitution in which our freedom to live and move where we like is clearly spelled out. I can't believe that there are still areas where discrimination exists.

Everybody keeps talking about "prejudice this and prejudice that..." Don't you think it's just that those people are paranoid?

Don't you think that it's because people are always making such a fuss about *buraku* this and *buraku* that, that they actually *create* the discrimination? Why doesn't everybody just get on with each other, and the prejudice will go away?

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group activity card #3

Just forget about it for a while and it will go away; you know how people say you should let sleeping dogs lie.

They teach the kids at school about the *buraku*. Isn't that what has created this attitude of discrimination against the *burakumin*, and all these unpleasant incidents?

Could it be due to the fact that they live in their own little clusters that they are discriminated against?

Break up the communities and the prejudice will go away.

Shouldn't we be promoting the concept of residential integration? That will get rid of all the misconceptions.

How come only the regions specifically identified by the government as *buraku* are improving? Doesn't this actually mean that normal people are now the ones being discriminated against?

These statements were taken from Kitaguchi, Suehiro, (1999). *An Introduction to the Buraku Issue: Questions and Answers.* Surrey, England: Japan Library.

resource card #1

		BURAKUMIN	NATIONAL AVERAGE
EMPLOYMENT & INCOME	Average annual income per household	¥2.438 million	¥4.129 million
	Unemployment rate	10%	4.4%
	Employed in companies with more than 300 employees *	10.6% (of employed *burakumin*)	23.3%
HOUSING (see photos next page)	Home ownership in 1993	62.7%	59.8%
	Average rent paid (1/3 of burakumin live in government-owned apartments)	¥8,138	¥33,762
EDUCATION	Entry of children into senior high school**	91.8%	96%
	Entry of high school graduates to college, university, or other post-secondary education	22%	40%
	Long-term absenteeism from primary school***	1.6%	0.8%
	Long-term absenteeism from junior high school	4.5%	2.4%

* Medium to large companies provide stable employment, higher salaries, and fringe benefits. Small firms are less stable, pay less, and offer fewer or no fringe benefits.

** While entry into senior high school has increased for *burakumin* children, the dropout rates in some places are double the national average.

*** Long-term absenteeism is often used as an indicator of low socioeconomic status and poor school performance.

The statistics were taken from Kitaguchi, Suehiro. *An Introduction to the Buraku Issue: Questions and Answers.* Surrey, England: Japan Library. 1999, p. 44, and Neary, Ian. "Burakumin in Contemporary Japan," from Weiner, Michael, ed. *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity.* 1997, p. 71.

In 1953 the government set a budget for improving the living conditions of *burakumin*, but progress was markedly slow for the next 16 years. In 1969, after 9 years of government-funded research on *burakumin* issues, the Special Measures Law for Dowa (integration) Projects was passed. It was the first specific policy for improving the situation of the *burakumin*. The law took effect in 1969, with the funding to cover a 10-year period, renewable thereafter. The main objectives of this law were to improve *burakumin* living conditions and to eradicate discrimination through "enlightenment." Below are photographs of urban and rural *buraku*. The pictures on the left were taken in the 1960s and the pictures on the right were taken in 1982.

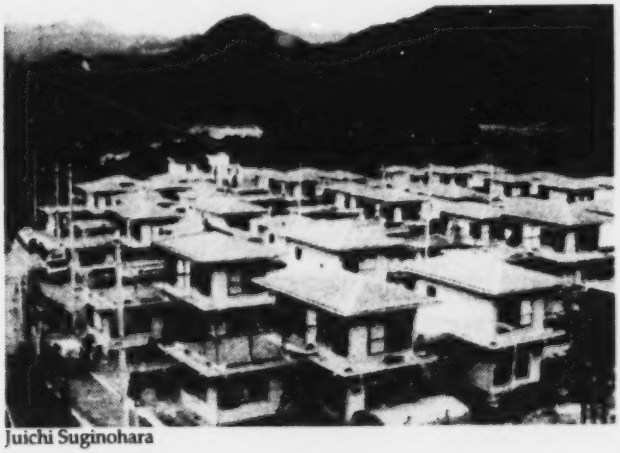
Kazufumi Fukumoto

Juichi Suginohara

Left: An urban *buraku* in 1966
Above: An urban *buraku* in 1982

Juichi Suginohara

Left: An old rural *buraku* (date unknown, estimated to be in the 1960s)
Below: A rural *buraku* in 1982



Juichi Suginohara

Photographs reprinted from De Vos, George, and Wagatsuma, Hiroshi, (1966). *Japan's Invisible Race: Caste in Culture and Personality.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 136, and Suginohara, Juichi, (1982). *The Status Discrimination in Japan: Introduction to the Buraku Problem.* Kobe City, Japan: The Hyogo Institute of [the] Buraku Problem, pp. 42 and 85.

Lesson Three

THE AINU, OKINAWANS, AND KOREANS IN JAPAN

Organizing Questions

- How has Japan's historical legacy of imperialism and nation building affected the identities of its minority groups?
- What is assimilation and how has it been a central theme in the discussion of Japan's minority groups?
- How do the experiences of Japan's minority groups parallel those of other minority groups in other societies?

Introduction

> Ethnic and racial discrimination in contemporary Japan is a problem of national identity. Japanese national identity, in turn, is the product of a historical process of state formation and re-formation that occurred over the course of several centuries within the context of East Asian geopolitics. Central to Japanese concepts of national identity is a myth of ethnic homogeneity and cultural, even physiological, uniqueness. This myth links national identity and ethnic issues in contemporary Japan. ... Japanese homogeneity has never been static. As the ethnic boundaries of Japan expand and contract, the qualities that constitute 'Japanese homogeneity' change (Howell, 1996: 171).

This lesson examines the nature of Japan's historical legacies that have impacted the identities and experiences of its minority-group population. The Ainu, Okinawans, and Koreans in Japan share a common existence as marginalized peoples in Japanese society. Each group has faced in the past, or still faces today, complex issues surrounding its identity as a discrete group in a larger society. This lesson introduces students to these three minority groups and challenges them to draw parallels between the minority groups in Japan and those in other societies.

Part 1 introduces Japan in the context of the international political climate of the mid-19th century and how Japan's era of nationalism and nation building might have been influenced by outside factors such as European imperialism throughout Asia and contemporary theories of Darwinism and social Darwinism. Together, these factors are evaluated in terms of their influence on Japanese society with regard to its minorities.

Part 2 engages students in the study of the three minority groups in Japan—Ainu, Okinawans, and Koreans. Individual and group activities reinforce students' understanding of the central theme of identity and ways in which minority-group identities have been shaped throughout Japanese history.

lesson three

Part 3 debriefs the entire curriculum module by leading students into a discussion about minority groups and related issues on a general level. Students draw parallels between minority groups and issues in Japan and in other societies.

Objectives

knowledge

- to gain basic knowledge about the Ainu, Okinawans, and Koreans in Japan
- to learn about minority-group issues in Japanese society

attitude

- to understand the complexities of identity and discrimination
- to maintain an open-minded approach to discussing sensitive issues relating to minority groups and minority-group issues

skill

- to use critical-thinking skills in drawing parallels between a case study of Japan and other situations
- to use quantitative data to synthesize hypotheses
- to recognize and identify possible reasons explaining the existence of diversity in any society

Materials

- Teacher Information Card, *Nationalism in a Japanese Context*
- Transparency #1, *untitled*
- Transparency #2, *Map of 19th Century Asia*
- Transparency #3, *untitled*
- Handout #1, *The Ainu*
- Handout #2, *The Okinawans*
- Handout #3, *The Koreans in Japan*
- Individual Activity Card #1, *Group 1*
- Individual Activity Cards #2a–c, *Group 2*
- Individual Activity Cards #3a–c, *Group 3*
- Group Activity Card
- Resource Card #1, *Group 1 (Ainu)*
- Resource Card #2, *Group 2 (Okinawans)*
- Resource Card #3, *Group 3 (Koreans in Japan)*
- Class Activity Card #1, *Comparison Chart*
- Class Activity Card #2, *Perceptions Survey*

Time

- At least 3 class periods

Teacher Preparation

1. Make Transparencies #1–3.
2. See Procedure Part 2 and decide how you want to structure the activity. To run the activity as directed, divide the total number of students into 3 groups and make one copy of Handouts #1–3 for each corresponding group.
3. Make 1 copy of Individual Activity Cards #1a–b for each student in Group 1.

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4. Make 1 copy of Individual Activity Cards #2a–c for each student in Group 2.
5. Make 1 copy of Individual Activity Cards #3a–c for each student in Group 3.
6. Make 1 copy of Group Activity Card for each small group.
7. Make 2 copies each of Resource Cards #1–3.
8. Make 1 copy of Class Activity Cards #1–2 for each student.

Procedure Part One

1. Before you start the lesson, read the Teacher Information Card. It is important that students learn about these minority groups in a world historical context, so they can begin to understand how oftentimes historical events do not occur in isolation but are directly or indirectly related to other world events. The policies of the Meiji era can be interpreted as a response or reaction to the dominating Western presence in Asia at the time. As you read through the Teacher Information Card, keep in mind how you can incorporate other world events that students have already learned about into the lesson. Discussion questions are provided but it is important that you have enough understanding of the topic to be able to facilitate the discussion in a way that challenges students to use critical thinking and deductive-reasoning skills. Take a moment to read through the information and discussion questions and make sure you are comfortable with them before you start the lesson.

2. Ask students if they know what "nationalism" is. The standard dictionary definition of the term is "loyalty and devotion to a nation, especially a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups." Discuss the term and what it means in a practical sense. What are the manifestations of nationalism?

3. Show Transparency #1 and ask students to take a moment to ponder the passage. Inform students that they will be learning about 3 of Japan's minority groups and how their existence has been affected by events in Japanese history and how the legacies of these events still affect these groups today. Reiterate with students the key points of the passage:
   - the common manifestations of nationalism
   - the key characteristics of nationalism
   - that national consciousness can be created or imagined

4. The following is an excerpt from the Teacher Information Card. Briefly summarize or read the passage below for students and engage students in a discussion around the questions that follow. If you prefer, have students answer the questions individually or in small groups instead of through a general class discussion.

   The Meiji era (1868–1912) was a pivotal period of time in Japan, also known as Japan's era of modernization. It is also known as its period of ultra-nationalism. Two significant features of this era were the government's organized efforts to create a national identity and Japan's imperialist expansion.

The Meiji era was a time when Japan looked heavily to the "West" (Europe) as a political, economic, and social model. It comes as no surprise, then, that Japan readily incorporated European influences and ideas into its own way of life. In addition to following a Western model of industrial development, Japan also embraced Europe's then-recent fascination with thenew theories of Darwinism and social Darwinism. The scientific theory of Darwinism asserts that natural selection favors the survival of some organisms over others, that only the strongest and "fittest" will survive. Social Darwinism is an extension of Darwinism to social phenomena, asserting that sociocultural advance is the product of intergroup conflict and competition, where the socially elite classes (those possessing wealth and power) possess biological superiority in the struggle for existence.

The theory of social Darwinism was used to explain the differences between people, to justify hierarchies among and between nations, and to legitimize imperialism as a natural process of social evolution—an effort to "help" the less able, inferior people of the world.

5. Show Transparency #2, *Map of 19th Century Asia*, and ask students to study the map, paying special attention to the European presence in Asia during that time.

Important Note: The map reflects the political boundaries and labels of Asia only during the 19th century. Below the country or territory label is the name of the colonizing country and the formal date of acquisition, in italicized boldface. The dates reflect only the *formal* date of acquisition, although in most cases the colonizing countries had been present long before this. The only territory that does *not* follow this format is Hokkaido, an island that Japan had claimed as its own centuries before but did not begin formally governing until 1855. Be sure students understand these things about the map before you continue.

Discussion Points and Questions:

- It is significant that Japan's modernization and period of nationalism occurred during a time when it was heavily influenced by the West. Looking at the map, what do you notice about Europe's presence in Asia at the time? (*The presence of European powers in Asia was pronounced. Many countries and areas near Japan were either already colonized or controlled by European powers by the time Japan entered the Meiji era.*)
- Discuss Europe's colonization of Southeast and East Asia. What were the main motivating factors for colonization? (*Economic benefits, political power, security measures. Trade with Asia offered Europe access to goods it could not otherwise obtain. Many colonies in Southeast Asia were entrepôts for trade with East Asia. Some scholars assert that a country originally colonizes for economic purposes, and later acquires the territories around that colony to protect its original investment. Other countries forcibly established their own concessions in certain cities like Shanghai, where they had their own trading rights and privileges.*)

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- In what ways do you think Europe and Japan might have used the theory of social Darwinism to justify colonization? (*They believed they were superior to these countries and had the right to overtake them. To extend this theory further, some even believed that they were helping these inferior countries develop and modernize.*)
- Why do you think a country would feel the need to justify its colonization of another country?
- Ask students to look at the map from the perspective of Japan at the time. How do you think Japan felt as a country in the midst of a dominating European presence? (*Try to emphasize the geographic location of Japan. France was in Vietnam, Spain was in the Philippines, Portugal was in Macau, Britain had just annexed Hong Kong, and Shanghai was just opened to foreign trade and concession. Try to get students to understand how Japan may have felt insecure at this time, wondering if it would be the next country to be colonized.*)
- Look at the dates on the map. What do you notice about the timing of Western nations' acquistion of territory and Japan's acquisition of territory? (*In some countries, such as the Philippines, colonizers—in this case the Spanish—had been there for hundreds of years. But other places were more recently taken over, or acquired, like Hong Kong, and the opening of Shanghai and Taiwan as treaty ports. Russia entered Sakhalin in 1853 and disputes between Russia and Japan continued for years after. During this time, Japan had nominal control over Hokkaido, but assumed direct control in 1855. Also, part of the Ryukyu Islands were already under Japanese control, but they were formally annexed and placed under direct Japanese rule in 1879. Toward the end of the century, Germany took control of Qingdao, China; Russia took control of Dalian, China; and the United States took control of the Philippines. Korea was colonized by Japan in 1910.*)
- In what ways do you think this feeling of insecurity might have influenced Japan's policies of territorial expansion in the Meiji era? (*In the interest of preventing itself from being regarded by the West as inferior, and protecting itself from being colonized, Japan embarked on a determined mission to assert its own superiority. It proceeded to gain control of nearby territories Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, the Kurile Islands, Taiwan, and Hokkaido and then tried to unify all these peoples as Japanese subjects.*)

Part Two

Since there is a significant amount of content in this lesson, it has been divided into group work. As the lesson is currently structured, one-third of the class will read about the Ainu; one-third of the class will read about the Okinawans; and one-third of the class will read about the Koreans. If you feel that your students will benefit more from reading all of the handouts, and if time allows, you can easily restructure the lesson to accommodate this format.

1. Divide the class into 3 large groups, numbered 1–3. Distribute Handouts #1–3 and Individual Activity Cards #1–3 as follows:
   - One copy of Handout #1 and Individual Activity Cards #1a–b to each student in Group #1
   - One copy of Handout #2 and Individual Activity Cards #2a–c to each student in Group #2
   - One copy of Handout #3 and Individual Activity Cards #3a–c to each student in Group #3

2. Instruct students to read their handout and to complete the activity. This part of the lesson may be assigned for homework to save classroom time if necessary.

3. Briefly discuss the handouts and activities before proceeding to the next activity. Use the following questions as a guide.
   - How has the Meiji era's legacy of nationalism affected the identities of these minority groups?
   - What other factors or events affected minority groups' identities?
   - Have these minority groups' identities remained constant throughout their histories as part of Japanese society?
   - Using the Identifier Cards of Lesson 2, how might an Ainu, Okinawan, or Korean in Japan rank the cards to reflect how he or she is identified by Japanese society?
   - Share some examples of the identity issues particular to each of these groups.
   - In your own society, do people experience similar identity issues?
   - What are some examples of minority groups in your own society that have faced or face similar issues?

4. For the next activity, divide each large group in half to form 6 small groups. (Each small group should have 4–6 students.) Distribute one Group Activity Card to each small group. In this activity, students must work together to create a news presentation to introduce the minority group they read about. For optimum student involvement and creativity, it is best to allow students several class periods and homework time to do ample research. If students have access to a videocamera, encourage them to videotape their newscast to show it to the class. Otherwise, have groups present their work to the class. While groups are presenting, have all students fill in the chart provided in Class Activity Card #1.

5. After all groups have finished presenting, generate a discussion around the following questions. Students can refer to their Comparison Chart for help in answering these questions. In addition to these questions, encourage students to share any additional thoughts or observations. If you feel that some of these questions would be inappropriate for your students to discuss aloud, you may assign them as journal writing or homework activities. Transition this discussion straight into the more general debriefing discussion.
   - How are the experiences and identities of these 3 minority groups similar?
   - How are the experiences and identities of these 3 minority groups different?
   - In your opinion, in what ways do these groups "qualify" as a minority group? Why do you think this way?
   - What are some of the parallel themes between these minority groups? (*identity, assimilation, discrimination, etc.*)

Part Three

1. Debriefing this lesson and the entire curriculum module is a critical part of reinforcing students' newly acquired knowledge and understanding of Japan's minority groups and general minority-

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group-related issues. The discussion points and questions below are more general than those in Part 2. They challenge students to continue thinking about minority issues beyond Japan and to draw parallels between the issues and experiences of Japan's minority groups and other minority groups in other societies. These questions and discussion points are meant only as a guide and it is up to you as the teacher to facilitate the discussion in a way that is most appropriate for your students. Again, if you feel that some of these questions would be inappropriate for your students to discuss aloud, you may use them as journal writing or homework assignments.

- Think about your own society for a moment. What determines whether or not a group of people is considered a minority group?
- Does the basis of identifying a minority group vary from region to region? For example, are certain ethnic groups such as Hispanics and Hispanic Americans, Asians and Asian Americans considered minorities all over the United States or only in certain regions?
- Has this basis of identification changed throughout history?
- Are there minority groups in your society whose experiences have been somewhat parallel to the ones you have just learned about in Japan? (*In the United States, some would consider the experiences of Hawaiians to be like that of the Okinawans, Native Americans to be like that of the Ainu, African Americans like that of the* burakumin, *and any immigrant group to be like that of the Koreans. Allow students enough time to think of their own examples before sharing these.*)
- Encourage students to reflect deeply about each of these comparisons and to share their thoughts on the similarities and differences of each set of compared groups, and whether or not they feel the comparison is notable.
- What are some minority-group-related issues these groups face in your society?
- What are some ways the government has tried to address these issues?
- Do these parallel the issues in Japanese society and the way the Japanese government has addressed them?
- How have the historical legacies of your society affected the identities of its minority groups?

2. Distribute one copy of Class Activity Card #2 to each student to complete. This is the same Perceptions Survey students completed at the end of Lesson 1, and is designed to reevaluate students' perceptions of Japanese and American societies, and how their perceptions may have changed in the past couple of weeks. After students have completed the surveys, redistribute their original surveys and ask students to compare their responses.

3. Conclude the activity, lesson, and module by asking students to write an essay on the following questions.
   - How and why does diversity exist?
   - In what contexts and ways has it shaped the individual and collective identities of minority groups in Japanese society? your own society?

NATIONALISM IN A JAPANESE CONTEXT

"Nationalism is a concept that is impossible to define in simple terms because it can vary so greatly from one situation to another. What remains consistent with all forms of nationalism is that they are always based on a type of national consciousness, a common attitude among people that they belong together in a national community. This consistency holds true even if the national consciousness is more imaginary and constructed than actual," (Weiner, 1997: 1).

The Meiji era (1868–1912) is known as Japan's era of modernization. It is also known as Japan's period of ultra-nationalism. Two significant features of this era were the government's organized efforts to create a national identity and Japan's imperialist expansion.

The Meiji era was a time when Japan looked heavily to the "West" (Europe) as a political, economic, and social model. It comes as no surprise, then, that Japan readily incorporated European influences and ideas in its own country. In addition to following a Western model of industrial development, Japan also embraced Europe's recent fascination with the new theories of Darwinism and social Darwinism. These theories were used to explain the differences between people, to justify hierarchies among and between nations, and to legitimize imperialism as an effort to "help" the less able, inferior people of the world, even though the true reasons might have been economic. By the 1860s, much of Asia had already been colonized by the West and it was plausible that Japan would be next.

Thus, in the interest of preventing itself from being regarded by the West as inferior, and protecting itself from imminent colonization, Japan embarked on a determined mission to assert its own superiority, a process of nationalism that came to define the Meiji era.

Nationalism in Japan required an organized effort by the government to manipulate and idealize cultural and "racial" homogeneity, to create a "national consciousness" among its people. To achieve this goal, certain aspects of Japanese culture were strongly emphasized, while marginal identities were either suppressed or subjected to a process of cultural redefinition to conform to this idea or definition of what was Japanese. This process essentially created a new national identity which rested on the assumed uniqueness and superiority of the Japanese people (Weiner, 1997: 1).

This lesson introduces 3 minority groups whose identities as minorities in Japan were influenced by these beliefs and events of the Meiji era. It is important that students understand the Meiji era in a world historical context so they can better comprehend the factors that have shaped Japan's minority groups.

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Depending upon the specific historical context, nationalism has most often been expressed in terms of economic or territorial expansion, the establishment of political sovereignty, or social and cultural norms of behavior.
Nationalism is a concept that is impossible to define in simple terms because it can vary so greatly from one situation to another. What remains consistent with all forms of nationalism is that they are always based on a type of national consciousness, a common attitude among people that they belong together in a national community. This consistency holds true even if the national consciousness is more imaginary and constructed than actual.

—Michael Weiner, "The Invention of Identity: 'Self' and 'Other' in Pre-War Japan." *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity.* 1997. p. 1.

transparency #2

MAP OF 19TH CENTURY ASIA

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Keep the following questions in mind as you read through your handout.

- How has the Meiji era's legacy of nationalism affected the identity of this minority group?
- What factors or events served to create or destroy this minority group's identity?
- Has this minority group's identity remained constant throughout its history as part of Japanese society or has it undergone any changes throughout the years?
- In its efforts to create a "national consciousness" among its people, the Japanese government strongly emphasized certain aspects of Japanese culture while suppressing or redefining marginal identities to conform to this definition of what was Japanese. How did this way of thinking affect the minority group you read about?
- Using the Identifier Cards of Lesson 2, how might a person from this minority group rank the cards to reflect how he or she is identified by Japanese society?

handout #1

THE AINU

indigenous—native

dialects—a regional variety of language

The Ainu are indigenous people who at one time inhabited the northern parts of Japan—a considerable part of the main island of Japan, the island of Hokkaido, the southern part of Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands. Though there is some variation in the cultures and dialects of these Ainu groups, they are collectively identified as a single group. In 1983, the Ainu population was roughly estimated to be between 18,000 and 25,000, although there may be as many as another 25,000 who prefer not to identify themselves as Ainu (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 13). More significant is the fact that there may be no "pure" (of unmixed ancestry) Ainu remaining today.

The traditional Ainu lived in small communities along inland rivers. There, they lived as hunters and gatherers, relying on deer and bear hunting, salmon fishing, and plant gathering for their food supply. They also engaged in trade with the people of China and Siberia by way of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands.

frontierland—a region that forms the margin of settled or developed territory

During the late 8th and 9th centuries, the Japanese engaged in many battles against the Ainu and eventually succeeded in securing much of Hokkaido as the new Japanese frontierland. By the 12th century, a large portion of Hokkaido had fallen under the control of the Matsumae feudal house, which made great efforts to maintain the distinct Ainu identity for its own political reasons. Likewise, the Ainu soon came to depend on the Matsumae for economic reasons of their own, since it was only through trade that they could obtain necessities such as ironware, weapons, cloth, rice, and tobacco.

intermediaries—mediators or go-betweens

monopoly—exclusive control

This dependent relationship allowed the Matsumae family to maintain its political position over the Ainu, which granted the family legitimacy in the eyes of the central Tokugawa government (Howell, 1994: 85). As long as the Ainu remained a "barbaric" and "uncivilized" tribal people in the eyes of Japan, the Matsumae house could remain intermediaries between the central Japanese government and these so-called barbarians. And as the Matsumae house formally held no land, its status was derived entirely from the monopoly it held over trade and other contact with the Ainu (Howell, 1994: 85).

For these reasons, the Matsumae house made diligent efforts to make sure the Ainu remained "Ainu" in all aspects. They did this by preventing Ainu from using the Japanese language and adopting Japanese customs. Their task was made simpler by the fact that the Ainu physically looked different from the Japanese, in that they tended to have more body hair and often bore Caucasian features like double-folded eyelids, and occasionally even blue eyes (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 12). Such physical differences made it easier and more justifiable to separate the Ainu from the Japanese.

The next several centuries were characterized by unfair trade practices between the Japanese and Ainu, a situation that provoked instances of armed rebellion initiated by the Ainu. While this economic relationship initially established the Ainu identity in terms of preserving its culture, it

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was the repeated military encounters with the Japanese that galvanized the Ainu to unite as a coherent ethnic group in terms of ethnic solidarity (Howell, 1994: 77).

sovereignty—autonomous control

assimilation—absorption into the culture of a group

In 1855 the central government assumed direct administration of Hokkaido in response to the threat posed to Japanese sovereignty over the island by Russia (Howell, 1994: 89). Magistrates dispatched to Hokkaido oversaw an assimilation program designed to win international recognition of the Ainu's Japanese identity and hence to secure Japan's territorial rights to areas inhabited by the Ainu, which included the Kurile Islands, southern Sakhalin, and Hokkaido (Howell, 1994: 89).

After the Meiji state came to power in 1868, it immediately launched a vigorous program of agricultural and industrial development in Hokkaido. The assimilation of the Ainu was an integral aspect of that policy. During the first 10 years of the Meiji era, all visible markers of Ainu ethnicity were banned, such as earrings and tattoos. Ainu religious practices were also banned, as was the practice of hunting in their ancestral hunting grounds. Furthermore, their actual name "Ainu" was legally changed to a Japanese term meaning "former aborigines" to further support the theory that they were now "Japanese" inhabitants of Japanese land. They became subject to taxation, civil and criminal law, and conscription under the same conditions as other Japanese subjects. The Meiji state's policy toward the Ainu culminated in the 1899 enactment of the "Law for the Protection of Former Hokkaido Aborigines," which "protected" the Ainu by forcing them to become petty farmers on marginal land (Howell, 1994: 91). This law was especially significant because it completely shifted the economic base of the Ainu from hunting and gathering to farming.

conscription—military draft

More than a century of intermarriage with Japanese and strict assimilation policies have virtually rendered the genuine Ainu culture and language extinct. The language, having no written form, is at risk of dying as the last old Ainu dies, for the younger generation was raised under strict Japanization policies that allowed the teaching of the Japanese language only. Ainu activists hope to keep their culture and language alive, and Ainu schools have been established for this purpose.

Japanization policies—government policies designed to make people "Japanese"

In recent years there has been a resurgence of Ainu pride and culture. Even the term "Ainu," which used to be derogatory and shameful, has become a label the Ainu wear proudly. The youth have been awakened to their ethnic heritage and wish to restore a sense of pride to the Ainu culture. They still face considerable social barriers, though, as the present attitudes of the Japanese toward the Ainu reflect a sense of condescending quaintness, a factor that has contributed to the commercialization of Ainu culture for tourism purposes (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 12).

The situation of the Ainu has improved in recent years, due in part to the increased international pressure and global attention given to indigenous peoples' rights and issues. Living standards have increased, though the average income of Ainu households is still well below that of majority

Japanese households. Pressure from Ainu activists has succeeded in securing substantial government funding to cover welfare payments, subsidies to buy farming and fishing equipment, and funding for education (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 13). Most Ainu, however, still remain landless, a factor that may well contribute to the further decline of the Ainu culture and identity (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 13). The New Law for the Ainu was passed in 1997, and was supposed to be a great victory in the fight for Ainu rights. But instead of guaranteeing significant social and political improvements for the Ainu, the law focused mostly on the preservation of culture and language. Yet, it is a victory, however small, in the continued pursuit of tolerance.

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THE OKINAWANS

What is commonly known as "Okinawa" is actually a scattering of 78 islands, called the Ryukyu Islands, located approximately 400 miles south of the Japanese mainland. The largest of these islands is called Okinawa and is home to the majority of the local population. After its annexation to Japan in 1879, the entire group of islands became known as the Okinawa Prefecture.

annexation—incorporation into the domain of another state (in this case Japan)

Even though archaeologists surmise that the original ancestors of the Japanese and the Ryukyuan people may be the same, their cultures diverged so much that they evolved into distinct ethnic groups with their own unique cultures and languages. The Ryukyus were originally an independent kingdom with their own system of government. Because the islands lacked any significant natural resources, they relied heavily on their strategic location and as early as the 12th century had established their value as an entrepôt for trade that connected the markets of Southeast Asia with China, Korea, and Japan (Taira, 1997: 141).

tributary—payment made to another to acknowledge submission

During the 14th century, the Ryukyu kingdom officially began to pay tribute to China. This meant that the Ryukyus declared their submission and loyalty to the emperor of China, and in return received such privileges as special trading rights and tributary gift exchanges. They also received massive economic, technical, and educational assistance from China, which contributed greatly to their material and cultural progress (Taira, 1997: 149). Therefore it is no surprise that much of the Ryukyu cultural practices evolved from their prolonged exposure to Chinese influences, and later on to Japanese influences as well.

autonomy—the quality of being self-governing

In 1609, during the Tokugawa or Edo era, a group of islands within the Ryukyus was overtaken by a Japanese invasion that used the islands primarily for their own trade purposes. Aside from trade, those islands and the rest of the Ryukyus retained much of their cultural independence and autonomy up until 1879, when all of the islands were forcibly annexed to Japan as part of the Meiji era's (1868–1912) nation-building expansion plan.

In the case of the Ryukyu Islands, though China still recognized the islands as an independent kingdom, Japan nevertheless proceeded to overtake the islands and claim them as Japanese territory. Upon annexation to Japan, the Ryukyu king was dethroned and the islands were declared to be the Okinawa Prefecture of Japan.

assimilation—absorption into the culture of a group

emigrating—leaving one's country or place of residence to live elsewhere

The process of "Japanization" reforms was accelerated after Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 (Taira, 1997: 156.) The new government enacted forcible assimilation policies that imposed direct rule and Japanese education, language, and culture (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 13). Not surprisingly, this period coincided with the global dispersion of Okinawans, who sought a better life by emigrating to other countries. By 1945, more than 15 percent of the Okinawan population had moved away (Taira, 1997: 157).

handout #2

eradicate—to do away with completely

The assimilation of Okinawans was carried out primarily through education, which became a tool to eradicate the Okinawan culture and language, as well as to indoctrinate children with the spirit of nationalism and reverence for the Emperor (Coates, 1990: 52). Universal elementary education was implemented. Not only were children taught the Japanese language at school and required to pay proper respect to portraits of the Emperor and Empress (Sawada, 1996: 49), but the use of their own language and culture was strictly forbidden.

imperial subjects—those who are under the control of the Emperor

Despite the assimilation policies and the basic willingness of Okinawans to assimilate, there was little done to overcome the widespread Japanese sense of superiority toward the Okinawans as an "'outgroup,' a minority of rather second-class, country cousins" (Kerr, 1958: 448). Moreover, during World War II especially, Okinawans were thought to "lack a strong sense of loyalty as Imperial subjects" because of their former close ties and loyalties to China (Coates, 1990: 54).

World War II left a profound legacy for Okinawans because of the deaths of many civilians who were caught in the crossfire during the Battle of Okinawa, and also because of the postwar U.S. military occupation. For the United States, Okinawa's supreme value lay in its strategic location, earning it the nickname "keystone of the Pacific" because it allowed easy access to Asia and Russia, which was especially important during the Vietnam War and Cold War. The conditions set forth by the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 made the U.S. occupation official.

social ethos—the guiding beliefs of society

During the years of direct U.S. military rule the economic structure and social ethos of the islands underwent significant changes. A large section of the best and most arable land was appropriated for military bases and facilities. The farmers who lost their land were either forced to work for the U.S. administration or they simply emigrated. The entire economy shifted to center around the service industries that catered to the ubiquitous military presence. American currency was used and large-scale imports destroyed many locally based industries and stifled local initiative (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 13).

Socially, the influence of the U.S. presence was felt as well. While the use of Japanese language in schools was continued, the U.S. government did not enforce strict assimilation policies as the Japanese government had. Thus, the Okinawan people experienced a resurgence of their culture through music, television, and other media. The ironic effect of the U.S. presence was that many Okinawans resented their presence and regarded the reversion to Japanese power as the best way to achieve the removal of U.S. military bases. Many Okinawans during these years denied their ethnic and cultural identity as Ryukyuans and claimed Japanese identity instead. They felt that from the U.S. perspective, this would help legitimize a reversion to Japanese power (Taira, 1997: 161). Unfortunately, even when Okinawa did revert to Japanese rule in 1972, the bases remained, and the problems associated with the bases also remained. In recent years the tension has arisen primarily from land appropriation issues and Japan's treatment of crimes committed by U.S. military personnel against local civilians.

Under Japanese control, the islands were opened up to mainland capital, which further undermined the local economy. Agriculture became an even smaller part of the local economy whereas tourism developed into the economic mainstay, with 75 percent of the labor force engaged in service sector occupations (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 13). Even so, unemployment in Okinawa is high and the average income is only 65 percent of that of the mainland.

service sector—useful labor that does not produce a tangible commodity (tourism, banking, etc.)

The Okinawans who went to Honshu (the main island of Japan) in search of a better life found that their Okinawan identity was often an obstacle to finding a good job. In such aspects of life as culture, language, and social relations, Japan has not been an easy adjustment for Okinawans. Instances of overt discrimination have decreased since World War II, but the problem has not totally disappeared. Okinawans seeking a Japanese identity often despair of their inability to become fully Japanese (Taira, 1997: 164). Some Okinawans also attempt to pass as Japanese, but this is a psychologically burdensome task since it involves changing one's name, moving to a new location or disguising one's address, and cutting off ties to family and friends to begin a new life (Taira, 1997: 165).

Increased international attention and pressure have forced Japan to become more tolerant of its ethnic diversity though reality still does not fully reflect official policy. For the Okinawans, positive media attention has been actively promoting the distinctiveness and respectability of the Okinawan culture (Taira, 1997: 166). The Okinawan dialect is now heard in public schools and workplaces in Okinawa. And Okinawan music is so popular that even mainstream Japanese musicians are incorporating elements of Okinawan music into their own songs.

Kurayoshi Takara, an Okinawan native, says, "The general feeling of the Okinawans is that the life of Okinawa has become much better. At the same time, however, our consciousness as 'Okinawans' and our hope to remain as 'Okinawans' (rather than as 'Japanese') has been increasing," (Tanigawa, 1986: 141–142, translation by Momoe Waguri). His feelings reflect the general sentiment of greater ethnic pride among most Okinawans today as they seek to reconcile their Okinawan heritage with their Japanese citizenship.

handout #3

THE KOREANS IN JAPAN

Contact between the peoples of the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago existed before the dawn of recorded history. Archaeological findings and historical documents indicate that from the latter half of the 4th century, Japan was in especially close contact with the Asian continent, primarily by way of the Korean peninsula, its nearest neighbor to the west. Japan owes much of its cultural development to the influences transmitted through Korea, such as art, Buddhism, Confucianism, and even the Chinese character writing system. For many centuries the two countries maintained a thriving trade relationship, up until the Mongol invasions of both Korea and Japan in the 13th century that stopped the flow of trade. Trade was further hampered by the bands of pirates (predominantly Japanese) that plundered the coasts of China and Korea.

In the 16th century, Japan and Korea's relatively friendly relations ended when Japan invaded both Korea and China. Though Japan eventually retreated in defeat, the 7-year war left much of Korea in ruins. It also left an indelible impression of Japanese brutality.

The end of the war marked a new era in Japan, known as the Tokugawa, or Edo, period (1603–1868). This new government wished to resume trade with Korea, and restored formal relations soon after it came to power. Although the Edo period was known as Japan's period of national seclusion, Japan retained its diplomatic and economic contact with Korea throughout much of this time.

The Meiji era (1868–1912) brought about many changes for Korea. While Western penetration brought Japan out of its seclusion, Korea remained closed off. Furthermore, Japan began to develop as a modern capitalist economy, and reverted back to its imperial system of government. Korea refused to recognize the new government because it assumed equal standing with the imperial government of China, of which Korea remained a tributary state. The Meiji government divided into camps for and against the military conquest of Korea. A series of military incidents catalyzed Japan's eventual takeover of Korea.

tributary—payment made to another to acknowledge submission

Japan again invaded Korea in 1904 at the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. Korea was then forced to enter into an alliance with Japan and became a protectorate of the Meiji government in power. Civil disorder resulting in part from a Japanese effort to disband the Korean army and a series of increasingly violent uprisings and political assassinations gave Japan its pretext for annexing Korea in 1910 (De Vos and Wetherall, 1983: 9).

protectorate—a dependent state under the protection of another

annexing—incorporating into the domain of another state

Most of the Koreans living in Japan today are a legacy of this period of Japanese colonialism. At the time of annexation, there were few Koreans in Japan, most of them students. A shortage of jobs and difficult living conditions under Japanese rule drove many Koreans to Manchuria, China, and even Japan to look for work. During World War II, Koreans were forcibly brought to Japan as laborers, many to the coal or gold mines, to solve the wartime labor shortage.

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assimilation—absorption into the culture of a group

Shinto—the native religion of Japan that worships deities of natural forces and venerates the Emperor as a descendant of the sun goddess

repatriated—returned to one's country of origin, allegiance, or citizenship

Under colonial policy, all Koreans were declared to be Japanese citizens. Assimilation programs required that all Koreans assume Japanese names, worship at Shinto shrines, and worship the Japanese emperor. In schools, Korean children were forbidden to speak their language, their Korean cultural customs were ridiculed, and Korean history was rewritten to portray Japan in a positive light. Toward the end of the war, Koreans also became subject to military draft.

By the end of World War II, there were more than 2.3 million Koreans living in Japan, the majority of whom chose to be repatriated soon after the war ended. The 650,000 who remained were mostly the early Korean immigrants and their offspring who were born and raised in Japan. After the war ended, the San Francisco Peace Treaty officially revoked the Koreans' Japanese citizenship and designated them as foreign residents, denying them basic civil rights like voting and welfare benefits. At the same time, they faced considerable social discrimination because they were considered inferior in much the same way as the *burakumin* were considered inferior.

emigrated—left one's country or place of residence to live elsewhere

allegiance—loyalty

The status of these Koreans was further complicated by the fact that Korea had separated into political divisions that did not exist when the Koreans had emigrated. Thus, the Koreans in Japan became sharply divided politically into those who claimed allegiance to North Korea and those who claimed allegiance to South Korea.

About 90 percent of the 700,000 Koreans in Japan today are Japanese-born, second- and third-generation Koreans, many of whom have never been to Korea nor learned to speak Korean. Birth in Japan does not legally ensure Japanese citizenship, unless one parent is a Japanese national. Both North and South Korea also abide by this same notion, that one's nationality is defined by ethnicity, not place of birth. Consequently, both Korean governments have always accepted Japan's treatment of Koreans as permanent foreign residents, and up until recently most Koreans also accepted their status as foreigners.

Under the conditions set forth by the 1950 Japanese Nationality Law, most Koreans are eligible to apply for Japanese citizenship. However, this is seen by many Koreans to be an undesirable option because naturalization requires the total relinquishment of one's Korean identity, including the surrendering of one's family name, native language and culture, and all political affiliations with ethnic organizations (Drake, 1992: 23). For most Koreans, this is too drastic because they still identify themselves ethnically as Koreans and take pride in this. Therefore, most Koreans in Japan are classified as "resident aliens," comprising about 85 percent of the total resident alien population. Every year several thousand Koreans are naturalized as Japanese citizens, and although they are growing as a total proportion of the Korean community they are still a fraction of the total Korean population in Japan.

In the early postwar years, most Korean children attended Korean schools in Japan, funded fully by either the North or South Korean governments. Creating their own Korean schools was in many ways a defensive reaction against the assimilationist education of Japanese schools during colonial times. It was also a way for the North and South

handout #3

Korean governments to maintain loyalty among what they considered their own citizens living in Japan.

The Korean population in Japan today is very different from the Korean population in Japan of the postwar years. Korean schools today are not attracting as many students as before, and it is estimated that fewer than 30 percent of all school-age Korean children attend Korean schools. The persistent legal and cultural discrimination against these schools is partially responsible for the decline of ethnic education, but a more significant reason for the increasing marginality of the Korean school systems is the changing demographic composition and political orientations of Koreans themselves (Kuk, 1990: 32).

marginality—the condition of being excluded from or existing outside of mainstream society

demographic—statistical characteristics of human populations

The younger generations of today have begun to voice demands for civil rights. They do not feel the same allegiance to Korea as the previous generations, who regarded the demand for civil rights as a symbol of weakening ethnic pride (Kuk, 1990: 33). Faced with social discrimination in marriage and employment, the younger generations question the validity of the existing cultural and legal traditions, powerful and ingrained both in Japan and Korea, that equate ethnicity with nationality (Kuk, 1990: 34). Most of the Koreans of today wish to be treated as Japanese nationals of Korean ethnicity as opposed to Korean nationals of Korean ethnicity.

The civil-rights movement began in 1970 with a commonplace case of occupational discrimination. A Korean youth sued a large Japanese corporation for firing him upon the discovery of his Korean identity. This lawsuit turned into a landmark case because the court found the corporation guilty of discrimination and ordered it to reinstate the youth to his job with back pay and compensation (Kuk, 1990: 34).

galvanized—jolted into action

The Korean community, galvanized by the process and success of the trial, continued its pursuit of civil rights with the formation of the Council to Fight Against Ethnic Discrimination. Its main objective has been to push the Japanese government to separate cultural or ethnic identity from political identity—or ethnicity from nationality (Kuk, 1990: 34). In doing so, they hope to gain social, economic, and cultural equality in Japanese society.

The civil-rights movement has redefined Korean minority issues as a domestic problem of Japan's, as opposed to the traditional view that this was an international problem between Korea and Japan. It is an attempt to transform the Japanese cultural consciousness and the meaning of Japanese identity (Kuk, 1990: 34). It is a challenge to Japan to reexamine its vision of a democratic society.

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individual activity card #1a

GROUP 1 (AINU)

Provided are some opinions of contemporary Ainu in Japan. As you read the passages, keep in mind that their opinions are not a reflection of all Ainu people, but only the personal opinions of these two individuals. After you finish reading the passages, write down your answers to the following questions.

1. In the first passage, why do you think the Ainu youth is angry?
2. What is the identity dilemma that tourism can pose to a minority group such as the Ainu?
3. Do you think the Ainu woman is content or discontent with her identity as an Ainu person? Why do you think her perspective is different from that of the youth?
4. The Westerner in the first passage later identified this situation as an example of the "dilemma that all minority groups face, especially those not strong enough to control their own destinies—assimilation or preservation of their identity." What does he mean by this? Do you agree with his assumption that assimilation and preservation of identity are mutually exclusive? Can a person assimilate into another culture but retain parts of his/her original cultural identity at the same time? Explain. Use the examples in these passages to support your statement. Feel free to include your own personal experiences if you think they are relevant.

Tourism can sometimes present a dilemma for some minority groups because they may have to practice certain rituals, dances, festivals, methods of dress, etc. to "entertain" tourists; yet these practices may be significant in terms of preserving their cultural identity. This sometimes causes problems when society then identifies the groups solely, or in large part, based on these practices.

These are the words of a young Ainu man explaining his feelings upon seeing a Westerner watch old Ainu men sing and dance for alcohol. Keep in mind that this story might not represent the opinions of all Ainu, but is a reflection of this particular youth.

You are deliberately getting them drunk to make them do those barbaric songs and dances. We would like you to stop immediately. It's an insult to us. You are making a spectacle of us, treating us like barbarians. ...It's because of people like you, keeping these old things alive just to satisfy your curiosity, that discrimination continues. I am as good a Japanese as anyone else here. I served in the army and several of my friends, from this very village, were killed in the war. The only difference is that my ancestors spoke a different language. But that doesn't make me different from other Japanese.

Reprinted from Siddle, Richard, (1996). *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan.* New York, NY: Routledge, p. 152.

individual activity card #1b

In this passage, the author is talking with an elderly Ainu woman. The woman is speaking in reference to the framed picture of the Emperor Hirohito, who reigned from 1926 to 1989.

Today, people might laugh if I get enthusiastic about the Emperor, but in our generation, we were taught to love and respect him." In her times, the goal of a "proper" Japanese person was to love and respect the Emperor. Becoming a "proper" Japanese person was the only way for the "uncivilized Ainu" to become "civilized." Ainu children were socialized repeatedly in any given situation so that they might attain the desired characteristics of Japanese citizens. "Imperial thoughts" (that Japan is the country of the gods and the Japanese are the children of the gods) were taught and promoted not only in Shushin (moral training class at school in which students were taught to respect the Emperor) and in Japanese language class, but also in physical education, where students chanted military songs, and in art classes.

Reprinted from Horiuchi, Koichi, (1993). *Kishimeku Hitobito Ainu.* [Squeaking People, Ainu]. Tokyo: Shinsen-sha, pp. 18-19. Passage translated by Momoe Waguri.

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individual activity card #2a

GROUP 2 (OKINAWANS)

Provided are some opinions of contemporary Okinawans in Japan as well as the Okinawa Prefectural People's Song. As you read the passages, keep in mind that their opinions are not a reflection of all Okinawan people, but only the personal opinions of these three individuals. After you finish reading the passages, write down your answers to the following questions.

1. How have the identities of these individuals been affected by Japanese policies regarding assimilation?
2. What is the mood of the Okinawan Prefectural People's Song? Is there a recurring theme?
3. One Western researcher made the following comment regarding minority groups: "All minority groups, especially those not strong enough to control their own destinies, face the same dilemma—assimilation or preservation of their identity." What is the dilemma described in these selections? Why is this a dilemma? What does he mean by this? Do you agree with his assumption that assimilation and preservation of identity are mutually exclusive? Can a person assimilate into another culture but retain parts of his/her original cultural identity at the same time? Explain. Use the examples in these passages to support your statement. Feel free to include your own personal experiences if you think they are relevant.

Note: *Uchinanchu* means "home folks" in the Okinawan language and refers to Okinawan people. *Yamato* is the ancient name of Japan.

The author of this passage is a Japanese mainlander.

...I often wonder why the Imperial Army chose Okinawa as the site of the most decisive land battle [of World War II], what kind of feeling the military and civilian Japanese had toward the people of Okinawa in those days. The sacrifices sustained by them were all too overwhelming. I feel I can understand the irreconcilable emotional injury sustained by the Okinawans when I see their strong resistance to the national security policy of the Japanese government.

...the people of Okinawa call themselves "uchinanchu" (home folks) and take pride in their Okinawan identity. It will be only when we, the Japanese from the mainland, come to appreciate their distinct culture and wonderfully big hearts that we can become their true friends. In this sense, the Okinawa problem is not just a problem for the Okinawans.

Reprinted from Nihei, Hiroshi, (1997). "We Must Change Now!" *Okamoto International Affairs Research Institute*, Tokyo. <http://sbpark.com/opia07.html>

individual activity card #2b

The author is a pediatrician in Japan. He is an Okinawan who recounts his childhood memories of growing up on Okinawa after World War II.

One of the unforgettable scenes of childhood was going out to the old hill in Shuri to pick bullets left by the war. In no time, all of us filled up the glass jars. Then, we walked into dark caves where we knew we would find large shells and rusty machine guns surrounded by fragments of human bones. These are the memories right around the time of Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972. The whole of Okinawa was tense in suspended anxiety awaiting the [arrival of] social upheavals expected of the reversion process. Children were holding their breath for the moment of their metamorphosis into some strange beings called "Japanese." The day finally arrived in a torrential rain for all Okinawans to return to their "home country" (to be declared "Japanese"). As for myself, I remember the sense of disappointment I had discovering that nothing changed and I was still the same old Okinawan kid.

... Now living in Osaka, Japan, or "Yamato" country, where I hear no roaring engines of low-flying aircraft, the sheer quietude serves as a loud reminder of what's been happening to my hometown in Okinawa. In the subsequent years, life in Okinawa seems to have become more plentiful as integration into Japan progressed, and the hills I used to pick bullets from have become subdivisions, causing soil erosion which in turn contaminated the sea and endangered the living coral reefs. The same modernization process has been seen everywhere in Okinawa. In the process of Japanization, wading through various events and happenings since 1995, we the *uchinanchu* have finally begun thinking about ourselves by asking whether all these changes were really what we wanted to see happen.

Reprinted from Sunagawa, Tomimasa, (1997). "Coming of a New Ryukyu Era." *Okamoto International Affairs Research Institute*, Tokyo. <http://sbpark.com/opia04.html>

The author of this passage is an Okinawan.

We were once encouraged to "become Japanese," and this is where we have arrived today after all the effort. Okinawa is a small country that the people of the Japanese mainland seldom paid any attention to until just a few years ago. And if you ask me to tell my feelings in so many words, "Hey you! Don't fool around with us anymore!" is more like it...

I admit that there are many advantages to being "Japanese," notably the public works expansion and the added job opportunities. But, when we look back carefully today, it has produced its own negative results too. For one thing, we have lost much of our beautiful nature in Okinawa."

Reprinted from Sunagawa, Seisaku, (1997). "My Personal Feelings and Aspirations." *Okamoto International Affairs Research Institute*, Tokyo. <http://sbpark.com/opia06.html>

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individual activity card #2c

The poem was written by Baku Yamanoguchi, an Okinawan who returned to the island after World War II.

"The Island That Was Showered with Bullets"

Upon stepping on the island soil
I greeted "Ganjui" ["How are you?" in the Okinawan dialect.]
"Thank you, I'm fine," said the island person in Japanese.
In my nostalgia I got confused,
Has the war destroyed even the Okinawan dialect?
The island person smiled wryly and said
"You're good at the Okinawan language."

Reprinted from Idaka, Hiroaki, (1986). *Okinawa Aidentiti: Yamato ni Torikomarenagara Yamato wo Soutaishisuru Kokoro* [Okinawan Identity: A Decisive Key of Moral Rise for Japanese]. Tokyo: Maruju, p. 172. Poem translated by Momoe Waguri.

The lyrics of this song were written by Seiko Miyasato.

Prefectural People's Song

The day breaks over the clean ocean
Clouds are cleared over the peaceful islands
Dawn bell sounds throughout the world
We now face the glorious morning
Gone are the days of trials
Oh! We solemnly swear
We swear eternal peace on Okinawa.

The Black Current runs around the islands
Green mountains and rivers glowing
We, the fellow citizens are stirred up
To build a new, independent, and prosperous Okinawa
Now, let us build eternal peace
On our home islands.

The skies are filled with lights
Stain the Deigo flowers with brilliant color
The folk culture inherited for generations
Now brilliantly shines over our home islands
Let us create our own culture
For future Okinawa.

Reprinted from the Okinawa Prefectural Homepage,
<http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/symbol/index-e.html>

individual activity card #3a

GROUP 3 (KOREANS)

The Japanese naturalization process for persons of Korean descent requires applicants to change their names to a Japanese name. The name change is one of the many requirements of naturalization and it evokes different reactions from people. Provided are some opinions of contemporary Koreans in Japan regarding this issue. As you read the passages, keep in mind that their opinions are not a reflection of all Koreans, but only the personal opinions of these three individuals. After you finish reading the passages, write down your answers to the following questions.

1. How have the identities of these individuals been affected by Japanese policies regarding assimilation?
2. One Western researcher made the following comment regarding minority groups: "All minority groups, especially those not strong enough to control their own destinies, face the same dilemma—assimilation or preservation of their identity." What is the dilemma described in these selections? Why is this a dilemma? What does he mean by this? Do you agree with his assumption that assimilation and preservation of identity are mutually exclusive? Can a person assimilate into another culture but retain parts of his/her original cultural identity at the same time? Explain. Use the examples in these passages to support your statement. Feel free to include your own personal experiences if you think they are relevant.
3. Do you think that changing one's name is all it takes to create a new identity?

The author is of Korean descent and grew up in Japan. The scene takes place in the author's school where the teacher is making an announcement to the class.

"Today," he says, without looking at us, holding up the piece of paper in front of him, "I must have your new names. I have the new names of most of you in this class, but the principal tells me that some of you have not yet registered your names. I shall call your old names, and those who are called will be excused from the class immediately, so that they can go home and return with their new names, which have been properly registered with the proper authorities in town. Do you understand what I am saying?"

Without waiting for our reaction, and still without looking at us, he calls out several names. My name is called.

"You may be excused," he says, crunching the piece of paper into a ball in his fist. "Report back as soon as you can."...

...I put my shoes on outside the classroom and, brushing aside the questions from the bewildered children, I start running away from the school as fast as I can in the blinding snow and choking, icy wind, running and skidding and stumbling in the deep snow. My new name, my old name, my true name, my not-true name? I am plunging and slogging through the snow, thinking, "I am going to lose my name; I am going to lose my name; we are all going to lose our names."

Reprinted from Kim, Richard E., (1970). *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood.* New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, pp. 99-100.

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individual activity card #3b

This is a poem written by a Korean girl in Japan to commemorate her name change from a Japanese name to a Korean name.

"I am a Korean," by Hwang Kyung Ja

Although I'm Korean,
Until now I've used a Japanese name.
Why, that's nothing short of telling a lie!
When my mother said to us sisters—
"Since you are Koreans, you are to use
your Korean names,"
We opposed her. After all,
When even now everyone says
"You Koreans, go back, go back to Korea"
Wouldn't they hound us even more
If once we changed our names?
But, you know, it was actually a relief
To use my own country's name.
From now on I'll tell everybody—
"I'm a Korean," and even if they don't
Call me Kyung Ja, they'll see it
Written on my nametag and know anyway.
Since I've begun to use that name,
My friends call me "Hwan San" or "Kyon Chan."
It makes me so happy!
But, of course, there are still those who try to
Make fools of us, shouting "Korean, Korean!"
It annoys me, I admit, for though I pretend
Not to hear, it's hard to take.
Yet I'm a Korean,
And no matter what they say to me,
I won't be discouraged.

Reprinted from *International Documentation (IDOC)*, Marginalization of Peoples, No. 65. New York: IDOC/North America, September 1974, p. 40.

individual activity card #3c

This is a poem written by a 14 year-old Korean girl in Japan whose parents had not yet been naturalized.

"I Want To Be a Japanese," by Omura Akiko

Until this moment,
I have been hating myself being Korean.
When I was little,
I was really shocked to learn myself
To be Korean.

Korea is a beautiful country.
My father, brother, and sister have been there several times.
I was told that the air is much cleaner, and things are much cheaper, too.

But, I can't help disliking Korea.
I don't think I can love it as my motherland.

When I was little, how many times was I insulted by my peers
And ridiculed about Korea?

When they said, how lucky they were to be born as Japanese,
I wish I could have said the same.

By all means, I want to be Japanese.
When I am 15
I must do my alien registration in person.

What shall I do, how shall I behave at the local district office?
I just hate to think of myself going to that office.

Nevertheless, my 15th birthday is coming soon...

Reprinted from Lee, Changsoo, "The Legal Status of Koreans in Japan," in Lee, Changsoo, and George De Vos, (1981). *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 154.

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group activity card

You and your group members staff a television news team. You feel that the release of certain statistics and the government's recent statement on minorities is an ideal opportunity to do a story on the Ainu, Okinawans, or Koreans (choose the one you studied about).

Step 1 Decide where your news team is from. You may choose to be from any location in any country but it must be for a reason that warrants your news story and is somehow related to the topic. For example, if you choose to be from a different country, is it because that country deals with similar issues with its own indigenous people or other ethnic groups? If you choose to be from a particular region in Japan, is it because these specific minority group issues are particularly relevant there? Bear in mind how your perspective and news report should vary depending on where your news team is from.

Step 2 Gather your information. Use the information in your handout and activity cards to write your news story. If time and resources permit, there is also a wealth of information on the Internet. In your report you will need to address the following questions:

- What is the history of this minority group?
- Why do they consider themselves a minority group?
- What has been the nature of this group's relationship with Japan?
- How has Japan's historical involvement with this group affected the group's identity?
- How would people from this minority group feel about the government's recent statement on its treatment of minorities?
- How do these people feel about their place and identity in Japanese society?

Step 3 You may present the story in a variety of formats ("live" interviews with people from that minority group and government employees, an anchorperson doing a newscast, or reporters on location, etc.). If you have access to a videocamera and have enough time, you might also consider videotaping your newscast to show to the class instead of presenting it "live." Be creative and present the story in the way that best suits the abilities and talents of your group.

resource card #1

GROUP 1 (AINU)

In the Japanese government's latest reports submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, they stressed that the Ainu are actually Japanese citizens who enjoy all of the human rights listed in the Japanese Constitution.

Article 14 of the Japanese Constitution specifically states that "All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic, or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status, or family origin."

In the Hokkaido local government's "Report on Actual Conditions of the Ainu People in Hokkaido, 1986," it was reported that:

85.2% of Ainu feel that they are discriminated against in marriage, society, jobs, and education	VS.	44.8% of non-Ainu in Hokkaido feel that the Ainu are discriminated against in these same areas
8.1% of Ainu have graduated from high school	VS.	27.4% of non-Ainu in Hokkaido have graduated from high school

Points to Consider:

- What conclusions can you draw from these percentage differences?
- Are lower rates of graduation from high school necessarily indicators of discrimination? Why or why not?
- Have you ever felt something was discriminatory while others did not?

Statistics taken from Sjöberg, Katarina, (1993). *The Return of the Ainu: Cultural Mobilization and the Practice of Ethnicity in Japan.* Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, p. 130.
Constitution article reprinted from <http://home.ntt.com/japan/constitution/english-Constitution.html>

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GROUP 2 (OKINAWANS)

The Okinawa Development Agency of the Okinawa Prefecture oversees economic activities in the entire prefecture. It also maintains detailed statistics on the prefectural economy. Income and employment are two of the most commonly used indicators of economic stability.

Per Capita Income			
	Okinawa Prefecture	All Other Japanese Prefectures	Gap
1972	445,000	712,000	60.0%
1996	2,198,000	3,745,392	70.4%

Employment in Okinawa and All Other Japanese Prefectures						
Fiscal Year	Monthly Active Job Applications		Monthly Active Job Openings		Ratio of Monthly Job Openings per Application	
	Okinawa	Japan	Okinawa	Japan	Okinawa	Japan
1973	12,522	1,070,262	2,507	1,852,935	0.20	1.73
1995	19,330	1,734,810	3,244	981,773	0.17	0.57

Points to Consider:

- What is significant about the income gap between Okinawa and all other Japanese prefectures?
- Note the differences between the number of jobs available in Okinawa and Japan.
- What does the ratio indicate of the opportunities for employment in Okinawa? In Japan?
- Have the numbers of applications in Okinawa increased or decreased?
- Have the numbers of job openings in Okinawa increased or decreased?
- Has the ratio of job openings per application increased or decreased? What does this mean specifically for Okinawans?

"Per Capita Income" statistics were obtained from the Economic Planning Agency, Okinawa Prefecture.
<http://www.okinawa-ric.or.jp/virtualtown/movee/english/kiso06_e.htm>

"Employment in Okinawa and Japan" statistics were obtained from the Ministry of Labor, Okinawa Development Agency, Okinawa Prefecture.
<http://www.okinawa-ric.or.jp/virtualtown/movee/english/kiso14_e.htm>

resource card #3

GROUP 3 (KOREANS IN JAPAN)

A 1993 survey conducted among 800 young (ages 18 to 30) South Korean nationals born in Japan revealed the following statistics about3ew this minority group.

"Which name do you use in daily life—your Japanese or Korean name?"

35.2% responded "always Japanese"
30.3% responded "almost always Japanese"
12.6% responded "Japanese more often than Korean"
5.7% responded "Japanese and Korean equally"
3.8% responded "Korean more often than Japanese"
6.0% responded "almost always Korean"
6.4% responded "always Korean"

It has long been said that Koreans in Japan use Japanese names in their daily lives to avoid discrimination by the Japanese. This same study revealed the following.

"Do you use your Japanese name to avoid discrimination?"

26.2% responded "yes"
43.2% responded "no"
30.6% responded "unsure"

"Do you use the name that you are most accustomed to, whether it is Japanese or Korean?"

71.3% responded "yes"
9.5% responded "no"
19.2% responded "unsure"

Points to Consider:

- Why is it significant that most Korean youths in Japan use the name that they are most accustomed to, as opposed to using their Japanese name specifically to avoid discrimination?
- How does this relate to the fact that over one-third of all Korean youths in Japan use their Japanese name in daily life?
- Do you refer to yourself with different names, e.g., surname, nickname, full name, for certain reasons or in certain contexts?

Statistics obtained from Fukuoka, Yasunori and Myung-Soo Kim, (1993). "Research on Consciousness Among Korean Youth in Japan, 1993," *Saitama University Review.* Vol. 31, No. 1.

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COMPARISON CHART

As you watch presentations on the two minority groups you did not study, compare the experiences and identity issues of those groups with those of the minority group you studied. Record your observations in the chart below.

Minority group you studied: _____

Group 1: _____	Group 2: _____
SIMILARITIES	SIMILARITIES
DIFFERENCES	DIFFERENCES

class activity card #2

PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being *strongly agree* and 5 being *strongly disagree*, rate your feelings regarding these statements. In the space below each statement, explain your choice.

1. Japan is a homogeneous country.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. The United States is a heterogeneous country.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Japan is a classless society.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. There are no minorities in Japan.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. There are many minorities in the United States.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. The United States has laws to protect its minorities.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Poverty does not exist in Japan.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Everyone in Japan speaks Japanese.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Japan is a meritocracy.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The United States is a meritocracy.
    1 2 3 4 5

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APPENDIX

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